



The sole-talke of the Soule:

OR,

A spiritnall and heauenly Dis-
logue, betwixt the Soule of
Man and God.

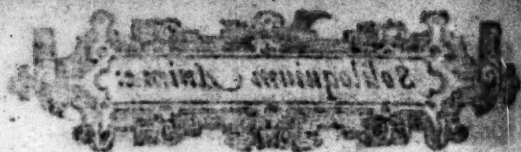
Which, for the great affinitie
it hath with other bookes of the Au-
ther published heretofore in
our natie tongue, is
now entituled

{ *The fourth booke of the* }
Imitation of Christ. }

Translated and corrected
by THOMAS ROGERS.



AT LONDON.
Printed by Humfrey Lownes.
1616.



The folke-talke of the Soules

OR

A discourse and conference
betweene the Soules
Man and God.

Which, for the greater edification
is set forth with other discourses
that published before, is
now reprinted, as
our native tongue, is

The fourth book of the
Imitation of Christ.

Translated and corrected
by THOMAS MOORE.



AT LONDON
Printed by Iohnes Iamies
1616.



To the Christian Reader.



Being much
and earnest-
lie requested
beere-vnto, I
hane published
in our vulgar tongue another of
Mallecolus, alias Th. de Kem-
pis, or Kempisius works: not
that (I confesse) which of some
well weening, though not so well
deeming, persons was comen-
ded vnto mee, I meane that
in the olde English translation,
and in some Latine copies too,
called The fourth booke of
the Imitation of Christ,

which indeede is altogether
De sacramento altaris, and
so intituled: but the next is
that in Kempisus workes,
namelie, the Soliloquium a-
nimæ. This I haue tearmed,
for the great affinitie it hath
with the bookes of Kempisus
by mee beere tofore diuulged,
The fourth booke of the I-
mitation of Christ.

In the doing whereof, I
haue as little as might bee
varied from the authors words
and phrases, and no where
from the sense, but where
himselfe hath varied from
the truth of God, and I doubt
not, would hee redressed, had
bee liued in these daies of
light, as he did in the time of
most palpable blindness.

doth

E. A.

And

And this have I done with
the greater alacritie, because
I finde (and thou maist read
it also in the Authors owne
Preface) that hee not onelie
doubted that hee might utter
some things both fende and
offensive, but also wished to
have some godly corrector of
his fautes, and praised vnto
almightie God graciously to
reueale such things offensive,
either vnto himselfe, or vnto
some other.

Whose godlie prayer, God
hath heard, and discovered
those things for thy benefite,
and iustification beside howe
Kempis, the Author, how-
soeuer lining in a popish time,
was yet in heart no Papist, but
would like well of that which

To the Christian Reader.

is done, as I trust thou wilt,
whose edifying, and spirituall
comforting, I have only ay-
med at.

And reaping this comfort
to thy soule, by the reading or
hearing of this treatise, be
thankfull unto thy God that
giueth thee some taste of the
celestiall ioyes in this misera-
ble and all troublesome world,
and whose gracious protec-
tion, I do most hum-

bly commend

thee to my
selfe.

The

The

The Authors

Preface.

I have gathered together in a little booke for my comforts sake, certaine devout sentences; the better to commit them to memorie; I have also disposed them as into a pleasant orchard, set out with all sorts of trees, and beautified with all varieties of goodly flowers, where into I might now and then enter, both for to chuse and behold at my neede such matter as my heart desires for the refreshing of the minde griued at any time, and overwhelmed with pensiveness.

Now the more cleerely, and readilie to finde vnder which arbor I might repose my selfe, or which floure were best to be culled out, I have made the
heads

The Authors preface.

heads of euery Chapter to glitter (as it were) with red titles. I haue likewise with variety of words, as now talking, now reasoning, praying now, now conferring, now in mine owne, now in anothers mans person, bewitched about the text with a sweete and delightful stile,

Wherefore I intreate them, whosoeuer shall reade it, first, that they bee not mowed with indignation at that which the writer hath done, for it vyes his minde wholly to talke (with his God) Next, that they will pardon the imperfection, and plainnesse of the stile, considering that God is more delighted with words that bee simple and pure, than with those that bee artificiall. And if happely the sense in any place appeere either not sound, or not cleare

The Authors preface.

enough, my desire is to haue a
godly corrector of the same, tel-
ling him withall, that what fond
matter so ever hee shall espie, it
hath escaped frō me not of pur-
pose, but rather for that I was
not heedie enough in marking
what I writ.

Mortouer, forasmuch as man
in that iudgement of his which is
most probable, may bee deui-
ned, vnto thee, O God, almighty,
and father of lighte, doe I
thine humble disciple make re-
course, and this Sole talke (of
mine) do present before thy di-
uine Maiestie, to the ende that
thou maist both approoue the
things well saide, and disproue
what is done amisse, and insinu-
ate also either into my selfe, or
some other faithfull seruant of
thine, more rightly to obserue
whatsoeuer things are offensive.

My request is also, holie Fa-
ther

The Authors preface.

ther, that I thy poore seruant
may obtaine at thy hands both
time and space to abide in the
all pleasant pastures of the scrip-
tures, which be and shall be my
chiefest comfort, till the day
of ascermaine appeare, as the sha-
dow of mortalitye doe decline
away. And therefore withdrawe
thou from mee all vnprofitable
care, worldly desires, husbail
affections, and what else may
hinder me from my desired lei-
sure. For hee must haue a free
minde and a quiet, that would
meditate of hidden & heavenly
matters. Wherefore that I
may bee worthy to attaine my
sute, vouchsafe thou (my God)
to endue and fill mee with the
grace of thine heavenly toy,
that I may speake to thy glory,
and to some comfort of my own
soule.

My redress is also, no less
cher



The Fourth booke of the Imitation of CHRIST.

CHAP. 1.

1. *A longing of the soule after God.*
2. *The incomprehensible maiesty of the Lord.*
3. *An exhortation to the loue of God.*

SONNET.



*As for me, it is good to
draw neere vnto God.*

2. O short, and O a Psal. 73. 3

sweet saying, embracing God, and aban-

doning the vniuersall world!

*What more can be said? And what
more-ouer is to be desired? Woulde
it not suffice if that was performed
which now is spoken? And were o-*

B

ther,

God the ioy of the godly.

Chap. 1

The fourth booke

ther, yea many other things vttered,
should not all in the end be reduced
vnto this one thing?

Therefore, my soule, saie thou
with the Prophet, *As for me it is good
to draw neere vnto God b.*

b ps. 73. 28

c Lu. 18. 19

O my God, thou art mine onlie
felicitie; thou alone art good e, and
sweet vnto me.

d Mat. 6. 21

Coloss. 3. 1

2.

e Phil. 4. 7

To speak of thee it delighteth the
louer; to think of thee, it liketh the
religious, whose heart is not fixed
vpon the world d, but hidden with
thee in the heauens, to the ende that
both thou alone maiest bee his
true peace e, and in most ioye; and
bee not vexed daily in this world,
where false concupiscence doth pro-
uoke vnto sin f.

f 1. Ioh. 2

16.

g Rom. 8.

35. 36. &c.

1. Cor. 13.

4. 5. &c.

O my God, how is hee affected,
which is inflamed with thy loue g
How doth hee reioyce, that hath no
pleasure in any vaine creature!

Are not these the words of such a

man in that Psalm, whereof the
beginning of my speech was taken;
euen these his words?

h ps. 73. 25

*Whom haue I in heauen but thee h
and I haue desired none in the earth
with thee.*

MAN.

MAN. O holie soule, O zealous
soule,

Chap. 3 *Worldly things but vaine things.*
of the Imitation of Christ.

soule to longing after God! What is
that I heare? What is that thou saist?
Are the things both in heauen and in
earth but small things in thine eyes?

SOVLE. Surely, I take all things **SOVLE.**
but for trifles.

MAN. What then seekest thou? **MAN.**
Who would you haue without thele?
And where will you finde him if not
in these things?

Hath he either name, or place, or
habitation to be sought by?

Where is the place where his ho-
nour dwelleth? of which in a certain
psalme thou sangest, saying: **i Psal. 26. 8.**

*O Lord, I haue loued the habitation
of thine house; and the place where
thou honour dwelleth.*

Make answer, I pray thee. For, if
thou canst, shewe me him, I will goe
with thee, and we will seeke him to-
gether, yea, and he shall be thy God,
and my God: and wee shall be full
happy when we haue found him, and
hold him.

SOVLE. What aske you this at **SOVLE.**
mine hand? Or why so curiously doe
you enquire of this matter of mee?
Think you I can, or am able to utter
such things? What though gladly I

The fourth booke

would, conceive not yet, that what through the rarenesse of the thing, and the deepnes of the mystery, I am restrained back?

What aske you mee? Aske them who haue both heard and scene, they are such as better can describe him whom you serke.

Apfal. 94.
8. 9. 10.

But rather aske him that knoweth all things. For he it is of whom we speake, that both best can tell you who himselfe is, yea and best declare the place of his owne abode. Euen he it is (and none other) which teacheth man knowledge, and giueth his grace also to the humble.

Pf. 119. 13
I pla. 94. 12
m lam. 4. 6.

Make recourse vnto him which reuealeth himselfe when he will, and to whom he vwill, neither is there any beside him that can open. Hee alone can reueale to thee what the ioy is of such as loue him, & that farre more excellently then I can tell you.

m Mat. 11.
25
1 Cor. 2. 9

M A N. But why speake you so this wise, O holy & humble Soule? Thinke not that I would know that of you, which neither ought to be known, nor can bee vttered. Keepe your secret to your selfe; let your doore still abide shut vpon you. let

of the Imitation of Christ,

the scale of faith remain vncancelled,
neither let the vaile, for me, be remo-
ned from the sanctuare.

Eate you holie bread (by your
selfe) in the chappell, go into the
tabernacle of your house, ascend in-
to the vpper parlour, enter into the cel-
lar of the eternall king, or, which is
more noble, & soundeth more sweet-
lie, euen into the bride chamber of
your celestially spouse.

I know it is written p, *It is not good* p Mar. 15.
to take the childrens bread, & to cast it 26
to whelps. I know this, I saie, and haue
read it: but marke againe what fol-
loweth, and take pittie vpon mee, ac-
cording to the word of her that said
e, *The whelpes doe eate of the crummes,* q Mar. 15
which fall from their maisters table. 27

And therefore hide not that fro
mee which I demaund, but of the
greame of your inward pleasures,
poure-out euen a sparkle of the fire
loue. Give me one small drop of pre-
tious wine, send forth some little fa-
uour of the best ointement, whose
chiefest parte and louelic comfort is
well and vsuallie knowne to thee,
that I also may taste thereof.

Why linger you? Satisfie my de-
sire, and open the doore to a friend

The fourth booke

now at this third knock.

O beloued, speake of the welbeloued; let not mee be neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightly as he is, yet speak of him so well as you can. For indeed as hee is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceiue the describer?

Therefore, if not, as in himselfe he is: yet tell me what thou thinkest of him. If not what to himselfe: yet utter out how good hee hath been to thee.

For, who euer shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt neuer doe it, because thou hast plainly confessed, and not denied, how speaking of him,

psa. 139. 6

7

Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for mee: it is so high that I cannot attaine vnto it. Whither shal I go frō thy spirit?

If then thou art not able to knowe thine owne spirit, which the Creator
 of Act. 17. 25 & quickner of all spirits hath made
 of Gen. 2. 7. & how at any time wilt thou knowe him which is vncreated? Did not this
 of ps. 35. 10 make thee all amazed to say, O Lord, who is like vnto thee?

Notwithstanding, of all friendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

of the imitation of Christ.

tained vnto : Neither is it for you to denie to shoue him in part, whom you thinke cannot whollie be reucaled.

S. I must needs say you are too curious, and importune vpon me. Thou searchest all my priuities, and lettest in thine hand into the secrets of my chamber.

I sent thee vnto him, and comcest thou againe vnto me? Seeke you me, or him?

But I pray you, of what spirit art thou? Be still I beseech thee, & trouble mee not. For whom thou seekest, he is aboue me.

M. But can hee that seeketh after God, so easily giue ouer? Protract not to speake, for you may comfort me forth-with, How long will you keepe mee in suspence? What, doe you say and vsay?

As I liue I will not giue ouer, except you blesse mee. For I count it a blessing, if thou show mee thy God.

Now therefore if thou hast seene him, tell me plainlie, and I will take him vpon my shoulders.

S. I know thou hast a great desire, and a loue vnto the creator.

The fourth booke

But a great thing is it vvhich you require at mine handes, and ſuch a thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou ſeekeſt, knoweth it right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know ſo much.

x Sal. 8. 1. 6. Your demand ſeemeth vnto mee to bee like that of the Spouſe vvhich in the ſongs did ſay *x*;

ſhow mee, O thou, whom my ſoule loneth, where thou feedeſt.

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with mee? Doubtleſſe it is not in me to ſhow you.

y 1. King. 8. 27. But you are not content; neither his greatneſſe, who exceedeth the heauens, can deterre you; nor my weakneſſe, which in his eyes am nothing, make you to deſiſt.

Why haſt thou laide this burden vpon mee? I am not able to tell thee, vntill I goe into the ſanctuarie of God *z*, and vnderſtand the ſame.

z Pſ. 73. 17 Why are you ſo deſirous to knowe that which may not be vttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how ſaine would I bee inſtructed! For thoſe things we are moſt earneſt to know, which the moſt hardlie may bee

reuea-

of the imitation of Christ.

revealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I pray you bee not so hard, as altogether to be silent.

Thinke not that forthwith I will utter what you shall say, vnto our enemye. I will keepe your saying as a friend, yea, as a very friend ought to doe.

You may boldly tell mee your mind secretly. Lo, wee two be heer alone; neither I with lightnesse, nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath given vs vnderstanding, euen of him will wee speake.

And if happely he come while we are talking, let vs give place, and let him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe to speake, let vs heare him gladly, and be silent till he haue done. At which time you shall not be bound to satisfie my demaunds. For when he speaketh, all flesh must be still.

S. This couenant I like well. Only let him bee with vs, and beewee carried vnto our secret places. Let him be the guide of our speech, and conduct vs whither our delight is to goe.

This beloued of whom you so

B^s

dili-

The fourth booke

diligently enquire, is for his greatness vnspcakable, for his height & glorie incomprehensible, for his strength and magnificence infinite.

Whatsoever is either spoken or written of him commeth far behinde his maiestie, because in glorie he excelleth all things.

The heauens haue saide, He hath ouerpasse, ascended, and preuailed ouer vs.

The earth hath answered, If the heauens, and the heauen of heauens doe not comprehend him, aske not me of him.

The starres haue sung; Wee are darknesse and not light, vnlesse hee inlighten vs.

The sea trembled, and said, Hee is not in mee, and the deepe knoweth him not.

Heare you what they say?

M. I heard, and was sore troubled; at their voice my verie lips trembled.

S. What then will become of thee if wee should aske him? Let vs speake vnto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whome the Prophets haue prophecied, and whose commandment all things in their seasons doe obey?

Vcrely

Emper.

II

God is vncreated

of the Imitation of Christ.

Verely, I am that I am g; and be- **G O D.**
sides me there is none other God h; **g Ex. 3. 14.**
I am the beginning & the ending i; **h Deut. 4.**
I am the Creator k; and the Gouern **35.**
our of all things. I liue saith the **p sa. 18. 31**
Lord, and I will raigne for euer and **Esa. 45. 31.**
euer. **i Reue. 18**

k Esa. 42. 5
Now little worrne, vwhat sayest **Ac. 17. 24**
thou beeing inuironed with such **/ Heb. 3. 3**
light? **Ioh. 5. 17**
Lo, thy beloued, whom thou **S O V L E.**
thoughtest was with mee, speaketh
vnto thee.

Hee was with mee when I said **p sa. 73**
m, For mee it is good to draw neer vnto **28.**
to **G O D.**

Hee will be with thee, if thou also **p sa. 77. 21**
wilt say, **o ler. 17. 16.**
My soule refuseth comfort:
the day of my sorow I desire none; for
thou art my king and my God **p p sa. 5. 2.**

Be not like to raging louers, but
loue God alone, seeke him alone,
which admitteth no companion of
the world into his fellowship.

Talke thou onely with him; and
though he depart, leauing the roome
void, beare all things patiently. For
his wont is to goe and come, to
prooue his friend, and make him
perfect.

The fourth Booke

perfect in louing.

If thou desire his presence, beare his absence patiently. Waite, and waite againe, hee will depart for a while, and after a while will againe returne.

Loue maketh thee thus affected, which now beaueth thee on high, and straight way singeth to the ground againe.

His loue is than all fountes sweeter, than lilies fairer, & brighter than the pretious stones.

For no creature is to bee preferred before the loue of God, and therefore for that euery thing is to be done.

q Mat. 10.

37.

r Mat. 16. 26

Luk. 9. 29.

So soon as I was touched inwardly with his loue, I forthwith began to be inflamed in my minde, that bidding adieu to all things in the world, I onely wished for his most pure embracements, and, as it were beating hot coales out of a burning Ouen, I uttered these words which but fewe doe vse.

f Psal. 73. 25
26.

Whom haue I in heauen but thee! and I haue desired none in the earth with thee. God is the strength of mine head, and my portion for ever.

By these gather now of thy beloved.

ued.

of the Imitation of Christ.

ued, what manner a one and what he is, which incomprehensibly exceedeth all the things which are, and haue being.

And although hee can neyther by words be vttered, nor conceiued in minde, because he is infinit: yet is he very lonely, tractable, fellowly, & to be intreated, in somuch as though he cannot be comprehended, yet after a strange manner hee may be loved.

Iob. 23
8.

For by loue hee is taken, yea by loue fast bounden: but by desire, hee is sought, by prayer, knocked at; and by hope attained.

If as yet I haue not satisfied you, let him, whome you haue sought, satisfy you, and teache you, about all teachers, to finde him selfe.

Chap.

The fourth Booke

Chap. 2.

1. Of God his distinct iudgement
at the end of this world. 2. The comfort
of the iudgement.

ps. 86. 11.



Not mine heart
vnto thee, O Lord,
that I may feare thy
Name.

ps. 96. 4.

O my God, thou
art much to bee lo-
ued, yea, and to bee feared much
thou art.

He. 10. 31

Hee that loueth, let him be glad;
but hee that loueth not thee, let
him quake and feare. But he which
feareth both feare thee, nor loue
thee, is utterly foolish and frantike.
For, it is a fearefull thing to fall into
thy hands.

ps. 90. 11

Mala. 3. 2

And, who knoweth the power of thy
wrath? Or, who may abide the day
of thy coming vnto iudgement?

Esai. 5. 29.

For, thy roaring shall bee like a
Lion; and thy glittering sword
like a consuming fire.

At the sound of thy voyce all the
dwellers in the world shall be mo-
ued; and when thou comest, all
the foundations of the earth shall
shake.

of the Imitation of Christ.

shake g.

Who then but will feare? Or by g 2 Pet. 3. 7
what meanes can any escape thine hands? Reu. 6. 14.

If a man will hide himselfe vpon
the strong rock, i, thou wilt thunder
thereupon, and it shall rent asunder. b Psa. 139. 7
8. &c.

And if he lurke in caues, or moun- i Isai. 2. 19.
taines, he shall be plucked out k, and 20. &c.
he made to sustaine thy displeasure l, k Hose. 10. 3
because hee cared not for thy fa- Luk. 23. 30
uour. l Reuel. 6.

Surelie there is no place which
can hide man from thy presence m. 16. 17.
Reuel. 9. 6

For all things are naked and open m Iob 23
in thine eyes n; thou seest the heart 10.
and the reins o; and beholdest the Psa. 139. 7.
most secret affectiōs of the thought, 8. &c.
so that no secret is hid from thine n Heb. 4. 13
eyes. o psal. 7. 9

O how terrible wilt thou bee to
sinners, and to the hearts that be har- p Eccl. 23.
dened q, which now doe glorie in 19. 20:

ill dooing, and triumph in wicked- q prou. 1.
nesse, saying, The Lord seeth not r, he 24. 25. &c.
will not regards. s. r Psa. 10. 11
l psal. 94. 7

They are so puffed vp with vaine
words, as though thou wouldest ne-
uer come: yea, they turne awaie
their eies, that they may not see the
ende.

But

The fourth Booke.

But in the houre that they thinke
 not, thou wilt come, and they shall
 be taken in the snares of their owne
 wickednesse. And as theeves and rob-
 bers being suddenly taken are con-
 founded: so shall they be put to con-
 fusion, at their due time.

Then wilt thou haue them in deri-
 sion, which now deride thy seruants;
 and euill shall bee rendered vnto such
 as haue abhorred thy righteous-
 nesse.

Now they stoppe their eares vnto
 thy voice; but the time shall come,
 when they shall erie and not bee
 heard.

Now they turne thy word into a
 fable: but themselves shall be turned
 then into a flame of fire. For thy
 word shall goe out with a horrible
 blasphemie; and it shall strike the wicked
 and Vnbeleeuers without all mer-
 cie.

What will the proud person saie
 when so puffed vp with knowledge,
 and swelling in power? What an-
 swere will hee make, when the last
 trumpe shall sounde in his eares?
 When thou Lord our God, shalt ap-
 peare in Maiestie, together with thine
 Angels and Archangels?

Then

of the imitation of Christ.

Then all the vngodly deriders of thy word shall bee hushed; and they which haue molested thy seruants, stricken with an horrible feare.

e Wisd. 5. 3
3.&c.

Then shall they vtterly bee confounded, which laying a good conscience and honestie aside, gaue themselves to vanitie and wantonnesse.

They shall suffer punishment then, which haue loosed the bridle vnto the flesh.

Then shall they roare towards heauen, which now are cunuing in vaine musicke and daunces.

Then shall that bee turned into mourning, which hath bin contracted by inordinate pleasure.

They shal be bound vp in bundles together to be burned then &, which d Mar. 13. haue beene companions together at 41.42.43 dronkenesse and bellie-cheere. And whom loue hath bound in vickednes, the reuenging fire shall roule together in torments.

O ye foolish, and wretched, O ye frantike, and blinde louers of the world, what doe yee, what is your meaning? how will yee escape the vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which
you

The fourth Booke

you do loue, do ye hasten vnto euermor-
lasting torments? Why feare ye not
hell, which do so feare a little penance?
And, you which flie the death of the
flesh, why aforehand do ye not take
heede of the eternall death of the
soule?

Vnlesse therefore yee doe conuert,
and repent, ye shall neuer escape these
horrible and fiery torments of Gods
displeasure.

When I consider the day and houre
of the generall iudgment, my bones
doe shake for feare, because entreatie
then shal not turne away the wrath of
God, but he wil be a righteous iudge
to all e.

Aa. 10. 42

1. Tim. 4. 8

Heb. 12. 23

O God most holie, mightie, and
mercifull Sauour, saue me from that
bitter death, and giue me grace to re-
pent, that I may vnfeinedly bewaile
my sinnes before I depart out of this
present world.



of the Imitation of Christ,

CHAP. 3.

1. *An humble confession of finnes.*2. *With a prayer for grace
to repent.*My sorrow is ever be-
fore mee 2.

psl. 38. 17

O my God, fond-
ly haue I spotted my
life with manifolde
finnes : but Lorde
behold my teares which I shead be-
fore thee, because I haue so much
offended thine holinesse.

For I knowe that in mee, that is, in
my flesh, dwelleth no good thing 6; 6 Ro. 7. 18.
and that so long as I carry about a
mortall bodie, I am not free from
wickednes.

I therefore doe sinne, and offend
day by day; & which is more lamen-
table, I suffer many sins to pass away
without sorrow & due repentance.

For being busie most commonly,
and encombred with affaires of the
world, & vaine curiousnes, I am not
able so speedilie to returne vnto
wholesome teares. Whereof it is that
the darknesse of sinne doth encrease

so

The fourth booke

so mightily against mee, the which
both stop vp the fountaine of grace,
and hinder the streames of heauenly
comfort from comming vnto me.

L O R D. And is that a small of-
fence?

S O V L E. No my God, it is a
great sinne, and so much the grea-
ter, as it passeth the sooner from the
heart, and doth not pricke mee with
sorrow.

But, Lord, wilt thou not regard
this my wicked dealing? How long
shall I delude thee, and thus deceiue
my selfe!

Wilt thou alway be silent? where
is thy rod? where is thy spur? where
is thy wand?

O Lord, why doost thou with-
drawe thy iudgement, and the paines
of hell from mine eyes?

Were these things alwaies in my
remembrance, could I be so reche-
lesse?

Thy silence and patience is for
mine amendement: but if I stil be
negligent, wilt thou not then punish
me seuerely? Surely thou wilt pu-
nish me, if not in this world, yet in
the world to come.

For nothing shall passe away vn-
reuenged,

Wis. 11.

20

1 Pet. 3.9

Wis. 12.

10.

of the Imitation of Christ.

reuenged, neither small, neither great offence.

But much better heere in this world, where both weeping is profitable, the paine is short, the satisfaction more accepted, and reconciliation sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod; but with a sharpe water annoint mine eyes, and referue me: my sinnes vntill the time to come; least then I bee deliuered vnto the tormenters vntill I haue paid the vtmost farthing.

Mat. 5. 26

Better it is now a little for my profit to be pricked, than hereafter to feele the bitter paines of hell fire.

Purgatory

Wherefore I am to mourne, and to conceiue a great sorrowe for my sinnes.

For many things I haue to bewaile; but no cause at all to laugh.

The darknesse of mine heart, the slipperinesse of my conscience, my pronenesse vnto wickednes, my want of grace, doe with mee, yea rather of decessitie doe enforce mee to weepe and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance of manifold temptations, and of assaults

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faults to sinne, should make me haue
little lust to be merry.

Spare me, O Lord, spare me.

For though I weepe, being tou-
ched inwardly with sorrow, it is no
marnell, because the time is now to
weepe.

O happy is the houre, when I co-
sectue sorrow for my finnes! Blessed
are the teares which doe flowe from
the griefe of heart, at the considera-
tion of the foulness of a guilty con-
science.

And who is able to sound the bot-
tom of this depth, & to reprove the
hidden filthiness without feeling?

g Ioh. 1.9

O my God, the true light, thou
canst lighten all the obscure places
of mine heart, yea and burne vp all
the spots therof, in the spirit of heat,
and iudgement.

h Psal. 52

10

It is in thee to give a new heart,
to create a new spirit, and there to
prepare a secret habitation, that it
may be a place for thee to rest in, and
a tabernacle of thy Name, which are
the louers of cleanness, and the guest
of the good conscience.

But forsomuch as willingly thou
dooest not visite a disordered house,
but

of the imitation of Christ.

but commonly leauest the same to
bee illuded with beastly affections, I
am the more carefull least that betide
me.

But helpe me, O mercifull & gra-
tious God, to repaire the ruines of
this mine house.

Woe to him from whome thou
departest away offended. But peace
to him vnto whom thou descendest,
and with whome thou abidest.

I miserable wretch now placed in
the midst of snares, and loaden with
the shackles of wickednes, what coun-
sell is best for me, or what remedie to
be vsed, but only to lift vp mine hea-
uie eyes vnto thee, that my crye may
be heard in the heauens?

For a polluted conscience shall ne-
uer finde or haue a better medicine,
than bitterly to slay it selfe in pray-
er. And how can extreame temptation
more profitablie be cured that it pre-
uaile not, than by powring continual
petitions vnto thee, and by humbling
our selues?

But who can giue mee these bles-
sings? I meane to pray and to weepe
as I ought to doe. Where may I
attaine

The fourth booke

attaine that humilitie, and abundance of teares? Doubtlesse of thee Lord, with whom is mercie *∞*, and great redemption.

1. Ps. 130. 7

O Lord, my God, the giver of all grace *h*, graunt that I may, as I am bound, bewaile mine offenders, seeme they neuer so small. and to amend all without vaine excuses, aswell those offences which are secret, as those that are well knowne.

k Lam. 1. 17

Let this mine heartie repentance get me thy fauour again, and prepare vnto well doing, and to that which tendeth vnto saluation.



of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 4.

1. A lamentation of the soule for her
weaknes and vnsustainednes in the
race of virgine.



Hine eyes did see

*me when I was without
forme a.*

a Psal. 139

O Lord my G O D, 10.

what in the ende will
become of me, seeing daily I doo
offend?

When shall I amende my life as I
ought to doo? When will it be bet-
ter with mee? When shall I waxe
strong? And when shall I over-
come?

I am cast headlong into the deepe
pit of filthinesse. Who can thinke
there is yet hope left to arise againe,
to amend, to goe forward, and to
come vnto the ende? Surely teu-
ching my selfe I am out of all hope:
ah that mine hope were stronger in
thee!

I greatly doe despaire, because
my weaknesse encreaseth through
long troubles; and I see no ende of
my sorrow, and sinne.

C 1

And

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And though I say, Lo now I will
begin to amend ; lo it is now time,
I will dooe my best to reforme my
self, straight-way, alas, since standeth
before mee, the enemy listeth vp
himselfe against mee, and wicked
custome keepeth mee backe with
might and maine, contrarie to my
minde.

O Lord, beholde how I am cast
downe and troden vnderfoote : be-
holde the troubles which I dooe in-
dure.

Lift vp thy righthand, and deli-
uer mee from my persecutors, for they
b ps. 143.6 are too strong for me b.

My wisdom is perished, and my
strength hath failed mee.

My arme is broken, neither can
c psal. 44.6 my sword saue me c.

I see not vnto whom I may flie ;
and that will receiue and heale me,
I know none.

Thou alone continuest my refuge:
but I dare not approach for shame,
because I haue offended thee.

I haue sinned O God, forgie me.
I am sorie, yea heartily sorie that e-
uer I did transgresse thy lawes.

Giue mee that which seemeth
right in thine eyes, and be merciful.

of the Imitation of Christ.

full.

Thou diddest iustly in forsaking me, and iustlie thou diddest commit mee into the hands of mine aduersarie.

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amende that which is decayed, for of it selfe it can neuer stand.

Marke my groaning, & my troubles: let the paine and grieve of mine heart at no time bee out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eye vpon my thraldome and imprisonment, vpon the misery and crueltie which I doe endure; and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison house, and wretched bondage.

Though a man should live many yeares, what will hee be the better thereby? And who knoweth whether he shall amend his wicked life, or be worse and worse?

Man woteth not how hee shall proceed, and end; and his continuance is verie doubtfull, because of the manifold chances of evils, and dangerous tentations.

Manie at their first conversion from sinne, are good and humble,

C 2

which

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which afterwarde become forward
and rebellious. At the first they were
modest and deuout, zealous and si-
lent, and in the end proued carelesse,
and dissolute, babblers, & barbarous.
And they which at the beginning did
bridle their wicked affections, at the
length had scarce any care at all, ei-
ther what they said or did. And so by
little & little wickednes taketh root,
and encreaseth while it is not preuen-
ted at the beginning.

Who therefore but should feare,
and be circumspect, seeing such vo-
lucikie chances doe come vnto the
good and modest?

Againē, who thoroughly dooth
know whether he be elected, or hath
strength to beare all things?

¶ *ACT. 14*
22.
¶ *1 PE. 1. 7.* Wee are to be tried, and who is
sure that he shall not be burned, see-
ing temptation is a fire?

So that all must feare, and hope a-
like of the better: but none is rashly
to presume, nor yet proudly to bee
secure.

¶ *pro. 17. 3.* Indeed the gold which is tryed,
shall be preserved: but I aduise thee,
O man, to consider well of what me-
tall thou art.

The

the limitation of Christ.

The celestiall purger will purge,
 he will fine the sonnes of Leui g, euen *g Mal. 3. 3.*
 all that are his seruants *h 2 Tim. 3.*

12.

It is not alwaies gold, which hath
 the colour of gold; neither is it al-
 way stubble, or naughty siluer, which
 endureth beating, and beareth the
 flail. For God beholdeth the very
 cogitations and the hearts; by them *psal. 7. 9*
 most commonly working wouders,
 which in the opinion of many, are
 but cast-awayes.

O Lord God, what ioy can I haue
 in this world, when I think vpon the
 vncertainetie, and frailtie of all *2 Pet. 3. 7*
 things vnder heauen? *Psal. 102.*

25. 26.

Notwithstanding, this am I sure
 of, that thou art good, and that thy
 mercy is from generation to genera-
 tion on them that feare thee. *1 Luk. 1. 50*

For thine infinite goodnesse and
 mercie, is greater than all my sinnes.

And this shall bee my comfort,
 while thou giuest me space
 to amend my
 life.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 5.

1. Of the shortnesse and miserie of this present life. 2. A prayer for grace to renounce the world, and the vanities of the same.



Let me vnderstand the shortnes of my daies. So long as I am in this world, I am wicked: and while I continue vpon the

Job. 14.

4.

Heb. 11

13.

1 Tim. 6.

7

Job 1. 21

earth, I am poore, a stranger, and a pilgrime.

I brought nothing into the world, & certain it is I can carie nothing thereout: for naked came I out of my mothers wombe, & naked shal I returne thither againe.

As a shadow which passeth away, and as a feather which is tossed vp & downe with the wind: and as a guest of one night, so suddenly shal I passe away.

All the time wee haue heere to liue, is but as the shortest night. Fewe and euill are my dayes, and after a little while they shal end, and bee as though they had neuer been

Ge. 47. 9.

of the Imitation of Christ.

beene.

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthines? Who will haue any care of a stinking carcas? Or who wil enquire of the absent being dead? whereas being aliuie he was accounted of.

A small while is man remembred either of his friends or of strangers: but vndoubtedly the righteous shall be had in euerlasting remembrance f, because hee shall bee euerlastingly f Ps. 112. 6 linked to G O D, who is alwaies the same, and shall neuer die g.

g Pl. 102

Therefore happie is he which putteth no trust in man; nor yet reioyceth in any worldly thing, but hath his heart fixed in heauen h: for what h ps. 2. 12 soeuer is in this world, is transitorie i and vaine.

Call into thy minde those which haue liued since the worlde began, 25. 26. vntill now, and tell, I pray thee, 1. Cor. 7. 31 where they bee? And those whom you see and heare to liue now, how long thinkest thou will they indure?

Say therefore of all, Euerie man that liueth, is but vanitie k.

O miserable and wretched life! k Ps. 39. 5

The fourth booke

O fraile, and lamentable life, which good men doe suffer rather than desire; and wicked men, albe they desire it, yet can they not long inioy the same!

Oh, vanitie of this world, when wilt thou haue an ende? when wilt thou cease!

Yet the time will come, when all the elect shall bee sette free from the
 1 Ro. 8. 22 bondage of corruption (though now
 23. they doe lament, because they are estranged from the kingdome of
 m Pl. 1. 23 Christ m.

Would to God, the whole world would euen wither vp in mine heart; and my Lord God, euen mine immortal spousse, seeme sweete vnto my soule!

Vndoubtedly, the fleeting ioy of this present life, is but a false and a most bitter potion. Let them drinke thereof that list, for afterward they shall feelee a most bitter fire. And the more one hath drunk thereof, the sharper shall his torments be, because the whole pleasure of this world shall more speedily passe away than the
 n Wis. 5. 8 winde, and leaue to their louers
 9. &c. paines and burnings.

o Lu. 12. 35 Therefore out of my sight thou deceipt-

of the Imitation of Christ.

deceitfull glorie of the world, and
all foolish pleasure of the flesh.

Manie you doe drawe, and de-
ceiue: but in the end you leaue and
destroy them p.

p 1. Ioh. 2.

Woe to them which beleeue thee; 15. 16. 17
woe be to them that are there drow-
ned.

But come, and come nigh mee,
most holy humilitie; and the full re-
noncing of all worldly pompes; and
seuer doe thou leaue me, O thou
sweete remembrance of my present
pilgrimage.

What am I but ashes, and earth q? 9 Eccles.
and whither tende I, but towards 10. 9
earth t? 1 Gen. 3. 19

Oh, how wretched am I become!
how iustly may I lament, when I
thinke vpon my pilgrimage s, & how 1 Heb. 11. 13
little I am priuie how I shall end the
same!

If I liue well, and continue so,
there is no cause why I should feare
an euill death. But who can glorie
of a good life, and of a pure consci-
ence? Hee which knoweth himselve
to be such a one, let him reioyce in
the Lord t, and take compassion vp- 1 1. cor. 13. 31
on me a sinner.

To liue I haue no desire u, because u Phi. 1. 23
miserie

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miserie environeth me on euery side;
to die, an euill conscience is affraide;
for, to answere God, it hath not one

x Job. 9. 3 for a thousand x.

The Prophet was not so in feare
yp. 108. 1 which saide y, *My heart is prepared*
O God, my heart is prepared.

O Lord, the God of my saluation,
let my life come vnto a good ende;
and prolong not the daies of my la-
mentation. With sorrow I came into
this prison; and without griefe I shall
not get out.

S. Long doe I thinke this life; and
the rather, because of the continuall
miserie and troubles which I finde
therein: but in truth it is not long,
for it passeth away more swiftly than

2 Job 9. 25 a Poste x.

To a man that liueth in paine and
a Eccles. 4. 1 miserie, all time is long, and bee
counteth a daie for a yeere. This

maketh my life tedious vnto mee,
and so much the more it dooth
trouble mee, as the more truly I
consider all the miseries of the

same. But, if happely any consolations
and ioy come betwene, it standeth
mee vpon to looke about whether
they be of God, or no. If they be

of.

Chapter 35. No happines but in heaven.
of the imitation of Christ.

of God. I accept them gladly, but
yet I knowe not how long they will
continue: yet how short. sooner
they tice, they like and please me
well.

But, would God hee would
poure them largely vpon me; and
cause them to continue with mee a
long while!

But the ioyes and pleasures which
are not of God, are vile and vading,
albeit to the shewe they appeare
sweet and pleasant.

Thus, euen thus passeth away
this life, replenished continually
both with good and euill things.

Therefore, so long as I live in this
world, I am a sojourning pilgrime. *6 Heb. 11.*

I cannot truly say I haue enough, *13*
because presently there is satietie. *Eccles. 1.*
of no good thing: but the good *8.*
thing which I looke for, thou art, *1 Psal. 119.*
in whom I belieue. *37.*

So that when thy glory hath ap-
peared, and replenished me, then,
euen then I will acknowledge, that
I haue enough. But in the meane
while, because this word is hidden
from mee, much griefe and sorrow
doth inuiron my soule.

And therefore beeing mindfull
of

No happiness but in heaven.

36

Chap. 9

The fourth booke

of thine holy saying, I repeat this
Math. 26 oftentimes, *My soule is very heauie,*
38 *even vnto the death.*

Well were it with me, if this houre
were come, and that neither griefe
nor sorrow did possesse me!

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy
goodnes conserue mee.



Chap.

of the Imitation of Christ.

Chap. 6.

An ardent desire of the soule
is belosed from sinne, and from the
troubles of this world.



Ring my soule out
of prison a.

apl. 142.7

The greatnesse of
my sorrow will not
suffer me to be still.

For why doe I yet live in this
world? I knowe not what I can doe
heere.

Slowlie, God hee knoweth, I goe
forward in virtue; nay woulde to
God I went not backward.

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest
thou doe mee, if speedilie thou
wouldest take mee out of this life,
that a worser thing come not vnto
mee.

6 Ioh. 5. 14

My life, alas, sigheth in paine and
in wel-dooing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my conversion,
I repent not by the same, but doe a-
buse thy long suffering: if thou pu-
nish mee, I doe hardly show patie-
ence, because thou pursuest drie
sub.

The fourth booke

Job 13

stubble.

25.

Why then doost thou not quite take away thy servant? Why doe I liue vpon the earth? That is, why doe I dwell among good people, & yet reforme not my life and manners? Why, so vnwoorthily and dangerously keepe I the place of some better person, and yet walke so carelesslie and so coldlie in this life.

Thus purre I out this weful thing which I consider of, in the name of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, cry not out in thine anger against mee, Cut downe

Lu. 13.7. the tree, and cast it into the fire.

I accuse mine infirmitie before thee, that I may finde grace in thy sight through my confession.

It is my part to accuse; but it belongeth vnto thee to shew mercy. It is my part to weepe and to sigh bitterly; but it belongeth vnto thee Lord, mercifully to comfort.

Wherefore, my Lord and God, either giue mee more grace in this life, or take mee speedily out of this world, that the rest be not worse.

For, to liue long, and not to cease from

of the Imitation of Christ.

from all liuing, is but to augment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I away with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceede in vertue, nor to bewaile wickednesse.

For that partie which leadeth an holy and righteous life, is grieved at the heart whensoever bee offendeth; and that bee may in grace and vertue increase more and more, it is alwaies his desire.

What shall he dooe which knoweth himselfe daily to offend; and that his flesh greuously dooth rise against the spirit? who also being overcome with tediousnesse sometime, and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, dooth giue over to resist, or else laying aside the spirituall weapons, doth follow the swinge of Eph. 6. 12. the flesh, whither his owne will doth draw him?

Alas, Lord and God, such a one alas draweth nigh vnto the gates of death; and liuing in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Oh, how is every one to take heed, that he be not seduced and supplanted of the enemye.

No man is sure from temptation. 1. Pet. 5. 8. Mat. 6. 13.

The fourth Booke

I Job. 14. 4 no man is pure from sinne: but all
p Ps. 51. 5. 7 the sort of vs are fraile &

1 Sam. 3. 2 But, Lord, thou which art almighty,
I Job. 13. 3 tie I, and knowest all things, raise
m Eccl. 23 vp the broken in heart; and cleanse
19. the volcano from all filthinesse, re-

Est. 13. 12 newe a newe spirit within his bowels,
 that all faintnesse and lasciuiousnesse may
 leaue him, that spirituall zeale may
 returne, and that thy loue may con-
 tinue vnmoueable within him vnto
 the end.

For he onely wanteth thine assi-
 stance, who is pessed downe with his
n Wil. 9. 15 owne waight; neither is he able
 to cast off the load of sinne, vntill
 thou sende strength from heauen of
 power to looke the hard fetters of car-
 nall affections.

And this, my request is to obtaine;
 for without thy speciall grace, wee
 shall neither leade a godly life in this
 world, nor liue eternally in the life
o Ro. 6. 12 to come.

And whereas I now liue in the bo-
 die, it is no ioye to mee; for better it
p phi. 1. 13 were for me to die, than to liue;
 because through this life I am de-
 barred the farther from eternall life,
 which cannot come, vntill that
 death doe destroye the life present,
 yea

of The Imitation of Christ.

yes and death also it selfe be deltrol-
ed.

Hence it is that my desire is to hea-
uen-ward, and mine heart seeking e-
small rest fetcheth deepe sighes, and
cryeth :

It is now enough Lord, take away
my soule, which thou hast redeemed
with thy pretious blood q.

q. 1. Pet. 1.

Open to me the gate of thy king-
dome and let in a poore pilgrime r,
returning vnto thee from exile.

18. 19.

r Heb. 11

13.

Listen to me, Lord, and loose me
from the band of the bodie f.

f. Phi. 1. 23

What should I longer doe here? I
am good neither to my selfe, nor to
others.

Why then doe I liue? To my selfe
I am burdensom, to others trouble-
some.

What shall become of mee? I wot
not, Lord, whether thou hast fore-
seene any better thing of me, wher-
fore my longing should be lingred.

I doe allow thine ordinance, be-
cause it is good: but in me onely I
finde the euill, why it grieveth and
troubleth me to liue in the world.

For daily I doe sinne; I heape
sinne vpon sinne, and yet as I ought,

I

The fourth Booke

I repent not.

If therefore I were loosed from
 t Rom. 6. 6 this bodie of sinne, and coupled to
 thee in heauen, neither should I of-
 fende any more, nor thou be offen-
 ded, but be praised continually.

Notwithstanding as yet thou be-
 rest with mee, and shewest all pati-
 u 2. Pet. 8. 9 ence.

I know my fault; because through
 my sinnes I may not enter into thy
 x Eph. 5. 5 kingdome. For none vncleane thing
 Reu. 22. 15 shall enter thereinto.

But when shall I be without sinne?
 When shall I thoroughly be cleansed,
 that I may not feare to bee prohibi-
 ted, but reioyce rather to be let in?

If I goe not forward more ze-
 louslie, nor be more carefull than hi-
 therto I haue bin, I am affraide, mine
 hope will be little enough.

But Lord, thou which wilt that
 y 1. Tim. 2 no man should perish, but that all
 4. should be saved, graunt mee more
 1. Pet. 3. 9 grace to the amendment of my life;
 and to hope for celestially blessings,
 giue mee the spirit of inwarde fat-
 nesse.

Let not mine heart heere reioyce
 after the flesh; but in fearing let it
 expect

the Imitation of Christ,

expect for death.

Let no care or creature hold mee
backe : but let thy desired presence
drawe and comfort me.

Blessed is the man which trusteth
in thee, O Lord & but more blessed & ps. 37. 34
is he that is passed out of this wicked and 27. 14
world, for hee shall no more either
feele or feare any trouble &.

& Rev. 7. 17
and 21. 4.



Chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 7.

1. A godly desire for a good death.

psa. 71. 5.



Lord, thou art mine
hope euen frō my youth.

In this hope I fly vn-
to thee, vntill the last
houre and time of my
resolution shall come.

Oh that I were so well prepared,
that I might euen now die vnder
the hope of grace!

Oh that I had ended this life
with an happie departure; and layd
off the loade of this body; how
many dangers and feares had I then
escaped!

Happy is the man whom thou
hast chosen & taken vp, who is now
gone out of this world vnto the fa-
ther; frō banishment, vnto a king-
dom; from the prison vnto the pa-
lace; from darkness vnto light;
from death vnto life; vnto security
from dangers; from labour vnto
rest; and from all manner miseries
vnto euerlasting felicitie.

Happy is the soule that now en-
ioyeth

of the Imitation of Christ.

joyeth her reward, triumphing in
thee her Lord!

But, alas that my Countrie is so
long kept from me!! *ps. 120.5*

How graciously and mercifullie
shouldest thou deale with mee, if
quickly I were called away, and bid-
den to come vnto thee, that where
thou art I might be also!

Oh that I had beene taken out of
this world, before euer I had known
the filthinesse of the same, and before
I was afraid to offend euen in small
things; how happy then had I bin!
But now the longer here I liue, the
more I wander from thee, and doe
sin in too too many things.

Woe is mee, what haue I done?
Alas, I haue followed the desires of
the flesh, and haue drawne vanitie to
my selfe with roapes, but godhnesse
I haue abandoned, abhorred inno-
cence, and added sinne vnto sinne:
so that now to my griefe I finde that
true which I haue sometime read in,
Woe be to the wicked, it shall bee euill to *Esay 3.*
with him. *11.*

Too too late almost I haue retur-
ned vnto my GOD, yea very late
it was ere I began to amend, & then
too

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too but slowly went I on ; I was not zealous enough in my proceeding, I did not encrease in zeale; but, which is worser, I waxed cooler and cooler.

Hence it was, that many times I was verie loath to die, because my guiltie conscience still told me I had not liued as I should haue done.

Notwithstanding, in consideration of the dangerous temptations (whereunto I am subiect) and that my sinnes might not increase, many a time haue I wished for death; and into these words haue I burst, saying:

Oh that now God in mercy would take mee out of this world, that I might sin no mote vpon earth! Oh that God speedily would vouchsafe to take mee away, and make an end of my labours; in what an happy state should I then be!

But, Lord, all things must be euen as thou wilt. If thou mindest to do that which I require, it shall forthwith be accomplished: but if otherwise, thy will be done.

I may viter out my desire, and the misery which I endure, not as

of The Imitation of Christ.

to him which is ignorant thereof,
but that thereby I may finde some
comfort to my soule.

I knowe I am not yet ready as I
ought to bee, for my conscience is
greatly out of quiet.

And what maruell though I, a sin-
ner, doe stand in feare, seeing many
euen of the holy fathers were afraid,
because thou iudgest not as man
doth.

But how shall I prepare my selfe? n 1. Sam. 16
17.
It were good for me to prepare my Iohn. 8. 15
16.
selfe against that time, which may
come this daie before to morrow for
any thing I know.

Therefore I will more firmly al-
ter my purpose; I will bewaile all my
negligences passed; I will sacrifice
my self to thee; and wholly & hence-
forth commend my selfe vnto thy
mercy, O Lord.

O Lord, my God, all my works do o Eph. 1. 6
7.
stand at thy mercie; and without
thy mercie I haue no merits. And
this is mine hope, this is all my trust.

But how fareth it with a good and
pure conscience? What saith the
chaste, and deuout soule? Come,
saith shee, Lord Iesus, O come, and p Reu. 22.
tarie 20.

The fourth Booke

tary not, vntie my sinnes, loose my
letters, bring me out of prison, out of
the lake of misery, and murie clay.

9 Psa. 40.
2. 1.

I haue waited patiently for thee,
O Lord, incline to me and heare my
crie. Leane me not any longer in this
wicked world.

Let it content thee that hitherto
I haue struen, that so long I haue bin
in exile; that I haue not desired to
enioy thee, nor to see thee face to

11. Cor. 13. face 7.

12.

Reu. 22. 4

Grant me to enioy the long de-
sired joy, which no time shall end, nor
troubles outshadow.

Mat. 18. 10

Shewe me thy countenance, which
the angels continually do behold.

Let thy voice bee heard in mine
eares, which they without ceasing
doe heare.

1. Heb. 11.

12. 13.

Come Lord Iesu, and take me out
of this forrain countrie; call mee
wretch home vnto my countrie; and
restore mee a sinner vnto my former
puritie.

Mat. 12. 1

Come gracious Redeemer, make
mee partaker of thine eternall glo-
rie.

It is his time that I retorne vnto
thee, it is now time that I commend
my bodie to the earth, wherewith

of the imitation of Christ.

was taken &c.

1 Gen. 2. 7

The matter is not great where the body be laide, or how it be handled, if so be the soule be safe, and come vnto thee.

Let my spirit doo well, which I commend into thine hands; and let my flesh rest in hope to bee raised vp againe in the last day. For where- 1. Cor. 15
soeuer it be buried, it can neuer bee 51. 52. 53
far, or hid from thee.

Remooue from mee the compa-
nie of men, and ioine me to the so-
cietie of thy saintes. For this tempo-
rall life is irksome to mee: but to
thinke of the day of eternall glorie,
reioycest mine heart.

Oh, let not the olde serpent 2. Rev. 12. 9
withstand mee at my departure out
of Egypt; let not the enemy barke
against mee in the gate: let neither
Satan with his ouglie sight terrifie,
nor the horror of death trouble me;
but let thine holy Angels faithfullie
assise, stoutly aide, valiantly pro-
tect, louingly receiue, and ioyfullie
bring mee vnto the euermore felici-
tie of thy celestiaall Paradise.

And mercifull, louely, and bles-
sed Iesu, do thou graciously, I be-
seech thee, beholde mee; and cast

D 1

me

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mee not out of the number of thy
seruants: but remember, O Sonne
of God, how thou hast redeemed
a Eph. 1. 3. 7 me with thy pretious blood a,
1. Pet. 1. 18

19. Receiue me into glorie, and that
in thy mercie and goodnesse, because
greatly haue I wished to solemnize
a passeouer with thee.

Oh happie day of my desired re-
ward! Come blessed houre of blest
passage, which long I haue des-
red, and kept before mine eyes.

b Ro. 8. 18 What now haue the troubles and
afflictions in the worlde hurt mee b?
What am I the worse for the con-
tempt, labor, and humiliation for thy
name sake?

c Phil. 1. 24 Thou hast bin my life, and now
death will be to mee an aduantage c,
and to be with thee in thy kingdome,
will be absolute felicitie.

d Ioh. 11. 25. Now praise and glorie be to thee,
who art the life of such as liue d, the

e A. 2. 26 hope of those which die e, the
saluation and rest of all

f Psal. 17. 7 which trust in
Psalm. 34. 8 thee f.

Pro. 16. 20

Chap.

of the imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 8.

A meditation of one dead vnto

the world, yet alive in

Christ.



Turne away mine eyes
from regarding vani-

Oh Iesu which art
the true life *b*, which

a Psal. 119

37.

b Ioh. 11. 5

neuer shall haue ende; giue me grace
that through loue of thee I may bee
consumed, through loue wounded,
through loue killed, that the flesh pre-
uaile not ouer me.

I am not as yet thoroughly dead to
the world, but the olde man yet li-
ueth in mee *c*, raising vp within mee
much contention, and desires of ma-
nifold euils, and making the nights
bitter, and the dayes tedious vnto
me.

c Ro. 7. 23

Oh when will it fall out, that bold-
ly I may say, I thought my selfe as a
dead man? For he which dead is, doth
weigh neither the praises of men, nor
the reproches of the malignant, be-
cause he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is
dead,

D 2

dead,

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dead, neither speaketh, nor smelleth, nor tasteth, nor exerciseth any work, yea, he neither heareth also the vanitie of this world: againe hee regardeth not curious & beautifull things enticing vnto the loue of some vile thing vpon earth.

And he which is dead to the world, is not in the world, but in God, to whom he liueth; euen as Paule to the beloued disciples doth say *d, Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

This man doth so speak, so think, so behold things without, as though they were nor. For the things which are scene, are temporall, and vaine: but the things which are not scene, are eternall.

1 Ioh. 2

17.

1 Cor. 4.

18.

Hither dooth he cast his eye; hither dooth hee hasten; hither is his desire; for these things dooth he labour; to attaine these things is all his studie.

1 Col. 3. 1. 2

These things hee wisheth, these things hee loueth, these things hee seeketh, these things hee saoureth, euen which are within, and secret, to wit, great good things, soveraign, and eternall things, of which hee cannot thinke too often, because they

of the Imitation of Christ.

they are exceeding precious, & sweet,
and delectable, and more then vte-
table *h.*

h 1 cor. 2.9

This man is farre estranged from
present things *i.*, and breatheth al-
together after things eternall *k.*, ha-
ving the dominion over the sensuall
appetite.

i Gal. 6.14

k Col. 3.2

For the flesh seeketh outward, de-
sireth pleasant, loueth present, loa-
theth absent, flieth all sharp and bit-
ter things, which notwithstanding
are good for the soule *l.* Whence it
commeth, that it will not suffer the
spirit to be arrest, but layeth before
it sundry fantasies, which are scarce
to be spoken, and in truth not to bee
accounted of.

l Rom. 8.

4.5. &c.

But hee which is endued with the
grace of spiritual fortitude, may with
more ease subdue the insolent moti-
ons of the flesh, singing in the word
of the diuine power *m.*, *The Lord is* *m* ps. 118.6
with me, therefore I will not feare what
flesh can doe vnto me.

Therefore albeit this sensualitie
doth moue battell, & the voice of
the flesh doth secretly murmur *n.*; *n* Ro. 8. 23.
yet doth not the spirituall man easi-
ly consent; for greater is the force
of the diuine loue which inwardly

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doth comfort.

This man now and then so sweet-
lie, so strongly, and so earnestly is
drawne, ravished, and in loue with
God, that scarcely hee doth see, and
perceiue the things about him, and
be heard in the world : because he is
not there, but elsewhere : not be-
lowe, but aloft euen with God, and
in God, which mooueth the spirit
within him, and erecteth, and as it
were carrieth it away in a fierie cha-
riot, that at the length it may enioye
him in an happie, and holy, and long
wished desire of his heart.

o Mat. 6. 21

This man is seldome found (idle)
abroade, because his friende hath
borne him away. There quietly and
alone he heareth his speech, euen the
speech of his beloued, and greatly
doth reioice to heare the voice of his
vn suspected spouse.

Neither straight-way doth he cast
his phiall vpon the ground to drawe
vp vanitie : but hideth the founte
treasure, and shutteth it vnder lock &
key, that the foote of pride come not
in, and so all vertue doe perish. For
thus he saith to him p. *See me as a feed
on thine heart, and so forth as it fol-
loweth in that place,*

p Sal. S. 8. 6

of the Imitation of Christ.

It is good to scale the heart, and to keep it, least the beloued go back, and flie away : because he seeketh & visiteth aboue all, a pure and an humble heart 9.

9 Mat. 5. 8
Mat. 11. 29

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandreth, and enquireth diligently, what thing is this ? and exceedingly reioyceth, for that manna is come downe from heauen.

And he which ministreth true bread 1 Ioh. 6. 31 from heauen 1, doth giue also a good 32. vnderstanding to the taster, that hee may know, how euerie good giuing and euerie gift is from aboue, and commeth downe from the father of lights 5.

This word now, saith hee, is from God. Without him there is nothing. I haue all things from him. 1 Sam. 1. 17
1 Ioh. 1. 3

Furthermore (this spirituall man) hee wondereth, and lamenteth that hee so lightly esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which hee is not a little blessed ; and whic also he dooth not oftner bend his heart to heare and to see that, than the which nothing is more sweete, and

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blest to be desired.

And would to God henceforth
I might thus doe. For this excee-
dingly doth delight me, and more
will delight me, the more I giue my
selfe vnto these meditations.

Oh that my beloued would come
into mine heart, that I might taste
the sweetnes of his apples!

Oh that hee would decline vnto
mee and shewe himselfe to mee, and
mee to himselfe ! He is my felicitie
and mine only delight.

Now begin I to conet, and desire
and greatly to loue this good thing,
u A.C. 17. 38 in whom all good things are ; this
ioye, in whom is all ioy ; this one
thing, in whom are all things, small
and great, base and hie ; yet nothing
created, but without all conceipt of
man, the beginning & the end of all
the good things which hee hath for-
med x.

x Rev. 1, 8
17.

Hence it is that now and then I
woulde thoroughly bee replenished
with this good thing, and filled with
that so heavenly ioy, and I conet
after a sort euen to be swallowed v
and consumed vtterly of him, that
mine insatiable desire might once be
satisfied in such sort, that nothing in

of the Imitation of Christ.

mee might be mine, but his onelie
whose the fire and heate of loue is,
whose this wonderfull worke is also,
that so I might the more greedily
be carried to him ward, and be made
one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding, all this doth not
puffe vp the godly man, or make
him to thinke himselfe some-what,
or to despise others, or to iudge infe-
riours: for he knoweth that whatso-
ever hee hath, commeth not of him-
selfe, but it is the free gift of God y. y 1.cor.4.7
that therby he is not to waxe proud,
when he perceiueth himselfe to be so
comforted of the Lord.

For hee seeketh not the praise of
man, he careth not for forraine fauor,
but hee seeketh the beloued, his
praise and his fauour hee onelie desi-
reth, in whom hee hath all things,
and shall finde more than all these
things: because hee preferreth his
loue, his sweetnesse, and the ioyfull
enjoying of him before all transito-
rie things; and his honour hee see-
keth and sigheth for aboue all things
else. And therefore hee cannot bee
proud, nor boast of any thing.

(God) hee is his glorie, his praise,
and his comfort z. (God euen) hee z 2.cor.1.31

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is his true and perfect ioy, his soueraigne and sole happinesse all his desire and perfection. And which more is, he would haue others also thus to reioyce with him, and to enioy such felicitie without ende both in this world, and in heauen too.

For this is his desire & praier, that God would reueale himselfe to all men, and that he would vouchsafe to conuert and drawe all vnto him, that he alone might be praised & glorified: for he is both loue it selfe & such a fountaine of loue, as neuer can bee drawne drie. For he doth more loue all men than all men (set together) can loue him.

21 Job. 4. 8

Notwithstanding, it liketh him well, if any man hath a desire to loue him from the bottom, although hee cannot sound vnto the depth. For he is louing deuoureth, vanquisheth, & surpasseth all.

Chap.

of the Imitation of Christ.

Chap. 9.

A desire of the soule, that no
earthly creature may carrie
her away vnto va-
nitie.



Behold, I would take my
flight far off, and lodge
in the mountaines.

a Pla. 55.7

Oh how profitable,
how sweete, and how
ioyfull a thing it is to sit solitarie in
silence, to talke with God, and to en-
ioy the onely good thing, in which
are all good things b !.

b Iam. 1. 27

Would to God I were so conioy-
ned to that simple and onely good
thing, that I might be mooued with
none affections and distractions of
transitorie things, nor curiously fa-
sten mine eies vpon any creature, and
visible thing !

O wretched man that I am, who
shall deliuer mee from the body of
this death c ?

c Ro. 7. 24

Alas how often dieth my soule for
the creatures which shee loueth ! oh
manie times shee forgetteth her crea-
tor, and is carried away for their
sakes.

Mine.

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Mine vnstable minde now willet
this thing, now that thing, now is
is heere, now there, seeking but not
finding rest in creatures: because
there is no creature which can yeeld
full satietie to be enioyed d, though
it hath some delectation for vse.

d Eccles. 1
8.

e Iere. 17. 9

f ps. 94. 11.

g 1 Tim. 1.

17.

h psal. 139.

7. 8. &c.

i Act. 17.

24.

k Psal. 97. 1.

l ps. 100. 3

& 119. 73.

The heart of man is vnsearchable,
and who can knowe it? O Lord,
thou knowest the thoughts of men,
that they are vaine f.

O eternall God g, most hie and
infinite h, the Creator i, and Gover-
nour of all things k, I am thy crea-
ture l, which thou hast made by thy
power.

Thou hast made me that I should
loue thee, and gladly would I loue
thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vaine loue,
and with clammie affection of tran-
sitory things; from which, while I
would rid my selfe, hardly or not at
all can I so doe without great paine.

Oh how soone would they flie and
perish, if thou Christ wert sweet and
didst saour in my nostrils.

Notwithstanding, sometime throg
the sight of the minde I doe behold
thine inuisible things, by the crea-
tion of the world m, & thee also the

mao. 1. 20

soule.

of the Imitation of Christ.

soueraigne felicitie, the true and eternall God.

And gladly would I continue in these meditations; but forthwith, I knowe not with what winde I am blowen away from them, and held downe like a miser by the loue and weight of visible things. Wils. 9. 15.

Behold, I firmly doe purpose in mine heart, as it were making a covenant betweene mee and thee, that for thy noble and precious loue, I will neither loue nor looke vpon any creature, but will contemne all things, yea my selfe and all mine: Ro. 8. 35. but straight-way worldly, fleshlie, and familiar cogitations doe ascend into mine heart, as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing: & these beare a good countenance, but they hide the wofull ende, showing what is present, but hiding the inconuenience that will ensue, as though euery where, and in all creatures thou art to be sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath been made of my God: and thus they withdrawe mee oftentimes from my purpose, and at the

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the length vtterly seduce me.

Oh how vaine, and deceitfull, and almost nothing, are things which now stand and flourish, prooued to bee p, which flying away after their sudden ioyes, doe leaue me among the thornes and briars of a guiltie conscience.

p Ioh. 2. 15
16. 17.

But woe is mee, Lord, yea woe againe to me because so soone I haue beleued and assented to vanitie, and so quickly forsaken thee, which art the truth q.

q Ioh. 14. 6

Oh, how greatly haue I sinned even in this, that I haue not sticken to thee alone, neglecting all things

r Lu. 18. 29. else. r 1
30.

For I was made to loue and to enioy thee: but by following after creatures inordinately, I haue lost thee, and found no rest for mine heart in them neither s.

s Eccles. 1. 8

But turne me vnto thee, O Lord, and leaue me not in earthly things, thou which hast vouchsafed to promise celestiaall things to such as fol-

t Mat. 19. 8 loue thee t.

Luke 9. 23

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 10.

1. A comparison betweene earthly
and heavenly ioyes; 2. with a prayer
for grace to contemne this
transitorie world.

My soule hath refused
comfort a. a Psal. 77.

Wander thou not
after deceiptful vani-
ties and madnes, O
my soule, but turne
vnto the Lord thy God, for he is the
fountaine of all comfort b.

b 2. cor. 1. 3

Whatsoever thou seekest eyther
among men, or among creatures,
thou shalt leese it, and shalt well
perceiue it to perish. For though I
graunt, they may yeelde some shewe
of comfort, yet sure, I am nothing
doth continue c.

c 1. Ioh. 2.

15. 16. 17

1. cor. 7. 31

Why so vainely wilt thou bee de-
ceined? It is egregious folly to beg
of a begger, when he that is rich wil
giue abundantly. Every creature is
but poore to minister comfort vnto
vs; but God which is rich in mercy d d Ephe. 2. 4
giueth to all men liberallie e, and e 1. sam. 1. 5
reprocheth no man, if thou for thy
part diligently doo seeke f, and pa f Matth. 7. 7
tiently.

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tiently expect his leisure.

Returne, O my soule, returne
g Gen. 8. 9 downe vnto Noah in the arke g, euen
vnto Christ in thine heart, because it
is not good to abide long abroad.

See thou refuse outward comfort,
h 1 Ioh. 2. 15 if inwardly thou wilt be refreshed h.
Doo not thou with the Crowe abide
1 Gen. 8. 7 without the arke i, but with speede
auoide the carcase. Returne thou an
hungred, and Christ so will feede
k Ioh. 6. 31 thee with the bread of life k.

33. 35. If vrgent necessitie, or weaknesse
hold thee abroad, take heed thou
make no stay, but with speede get
thee home, least thou bee either o-
uerwhelmed with the flood of words,
or comprehended in the snares of
diuelish temptation.

Many traps are laid for the wan-
dering soule; and great safetie hath
the quicke returning doone: which
not finding where to set her foote,
made hast to come back vnto Noah
in the ship.

Gen. 8. 9.

Go thou therefore vnto thy secret
place and abide there, yea let it bee
a griefe for thee to be else where.

O Blessed is the soule, which
hath a cleere conscience before God
m Mar. 5. 9 m, and is not delighted with anie
vaine.

of the imitation of Christ.

vaine thing, which is neither polluted with louing any thing, nor wearied with extreame hating any man p¹.

Lck. 28

29. 30

o 1. Ioh. 2

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no comfort of creatures, but fixeth all her hope in the Lord q¹.

15. 16.

p Mat. 5.

22. 23. &c.

Blessed is the soule which refuseth all outward and temporal quietnesse, and whatsoever belongeth vnto the welfare of the body; and which for the loue of CHRIST doth willingly embrace both paine and pauer.

q Psa. 40. 4

Blessed is the soule which comendeth her selfe to God, that hee may doo with her euen as hee thinketh good!

r Mat. 19.

29.

Blessed is the soule which at no time seeketh her own glory, which desireth at no time to haue her own will done; but continually mindeth, loueth, and preferreth the glorie and will of God about all things.

f Ier. 9. 24

1. Cor. 1. 31

Blessed is the soule which dooth estrange herselfe from whatsoever is temporall, and keepeth herselfe pure and vndefiled before God in all her dealings.

t 1. Iohn 2

15. 16.

u ps. 15. 1. 2

O Reioyce and be thou much glad, thou which art such a soule: for thou maist

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maist abide in secret and celestiall cogitations, and so magnifie the Lord, day and night.

* Colof. 3

1.2

y Eze. 11.

22.

* Mar. 5.8

Blessed and blessed againe is the soule whose desires are to heauēward x, whose hands and armes are outstretched euen as the two wings of the Cherubins y; whose eyes are pure to beholde God x, whose inward power and strength doth go altogether, and ascend, and returneth not, vntill it haue him whom onely she loneth before all things! And when she hath found him, shee followeth him whither soeuer he will haue her!

* Gen. 25.1

And when he speaketh, hee reioyseth to heare her make answer, saying; I am thine only beloued, of thee elected. I am thine exceeding great reward. Be thou neither proud in prosperitie, nor impatient in aduersitie. Consider how they which loue me are comforted of me. How sweetly, thinkest thou, I will intreate them, when they shall be receined vnto the eternall rest, after that the troubles of the body and soule are laid aside!

Oh that I enjoyed such pleasure, as dooth the holy soule, when the senses

of the Imitation of Christ.

senses beeing a sleep, she is carried aloft, and eleuated aboue her selfe, beloved, and coupled to GOD by the bond of most heartie friendship! O my God; which art the treasure of mine heart, thou knowest right well how this would bee the onely comfort of mine inward grieffe. But thou art the giuer, & the pouer in of this oymment. b Mat. 6. 21

Thou teachest, thou exhortest, c 2. Tim. 3
thou cherishest, thou comfortest, 16.
thou carriest, thou vpholdest, thou guidest out and bringest backe, thou doost with the soule whom thou hast chosen, euen as thou wilt, and whatsoeuer thou doost and wilt, it is all good.

But I who am as a sowre vessell, altogether vnworthie to receiue the infusion of thy good spirit, doe humbly craue that plentifully it may so spout forth vpon me, that I may both taste the sweetnesse of thine inward loue, and also perceiue those sacred pleasures, the which, I doubt not, the religious soule doth feelee by thy grace.

I did smell the celestiall perfumes a far off, when I did meditate certain inward cogitations of the minde concer.

The fourth booke

concerning the soule; but Lord, thou knowest how sildom, how little I do thinke of eternall things, how often words doe wither, how rude the vnderstanding, how vnquiet the conscience, how my heart is troubled, darkened and irreligious, and onely through mine owne default.

Notwithstanding, sometime seeking a way vnto spiritual matters, hauing taken my cogitations with me in secret, I begin seriously to call in-to my remembrance the good things of the blessed soule, how great are the celestiaall ioyes, and spiritual delights which are in her heart; what peace, what tranquillitie, what hope, and reioicing in God her Saviour, whose words be sweet, and face beautifull. And these cogitations, though short, they endure, yet when they come, blessed is the houre.

And I thus thinking, and thou enlightning my darknes, I do find iust complaints vpon my selfe, & by priuie holes of grace, I perceine how such and such is the soule inwardly vnited vnto thee, and that so and so thou hast spoken to her.

She is still from all things sensible,
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and thou in the spirit speakest to her
of inuisible matters.

Shée seemeth as it were to be for-
saken of all creatures, & after an vn-
speakeable manner thou dost some-
fort her.

So that I said againe in my heart,
Wo to the sinfull soule e, to the grie-
ued conscience d, to the man which
is neither hot nor cold e, destitute of
the light of grace, and of spirituall
comfort, seeking teares, & yet find-
ing none.

e Deut. 27.

26

Gal. 3. 10

d pro. 3. 33

and 24. 19

e Reu. 3. 15

16

But peace bee to him which vnfei-
nedly doth loue Christ, & neuer tur-
neth aside the eyes of his heart from
his Sauour f: but continually see-
keth the things which are pleasing in
his eyes.

f Col. 3. 2.

For he shall walke in peace and e-
quitie, and no stranger shall partici-
pate of his pleasure. He shall wel per-
ceiue that his rest is good, and taste
how sweet his Lord God is, in whom
hee trusteth g. He shall set him farre
from outward tumults, and with
hartie desire expect his prosperous
coming. Lo, thus worketh the Lord
in his elected vessels!

g Psal. 34.

Hee which commeth vnto him,
shall not returne empty away: for
cheere.

The fourth Booke

cheerfully hee bestoweth vpon the
thirstie drinke, and bread vpon the
hungry h.

b Mat. 25
35.

O my God, when thou entrest in
to the house of the soule which lou-
ueth thee, wilt thou not feede her
with thy milke? yea and bring her
sometime beside her selfe, through
thine abundant sweetnesse, to the ta-
king of thee without any corporall si-
militude!

O truth, truth, of what force and
power is loue!

Then wilt thou speak thy word to
her all secretly, and shewe the things
that shall be, and haue beene in most
happie charitie, and fruition, where
the words of man shall no more be
heard.

From thenceforth thou wilt cause
her no whit to doubt any more of e-
ternall rest, and of the fellowship of
saints: but now by deferring the to-
ken of special grace, thou makest her
the more able to hope for the things
she seeth not, and to despise present
things which by sense she cōprehendeth.

i Ro. 8. 24

O mercifull God, be mindefull of
me a poore begger, euen of thy great
k 1. cor. 1. 3 mercie k; and sende the true bread
from

of the imitation of Christ.

from heauen l, thy good word to full I Ioh. 6. 32.
of comfort and grace. 32. &c.

CHAP. XI.

1. That all comfort, and pleasures
are in God. 2. A praier that all people
may glorifie the Lord. 3. The blessed
state of good men. 4. That we
are to be ready against
the comming of our
sauior Christ.



Let my bones shall
say, Lord, who is like

unto thee? There is one b, &
like to him there is
none c, euen my

a ps. 35. 10.
b Deut. 6. 4.
c 1. King. 8.
23.

God it is d, to whom, whatsoeuer is
compared, is nothing e.

d Iohn 20.
17.

My God is entirely to be loued,
and a most faithfull friend, which ne-
uer forsaketh the soule that loueth
him f, but continually abideth with
her for company. And if sometime
he hide himselfe, and suffer her to be
troubled, it is not done of him to de-
stroy, but to trie her g, to purge her
h, and to instruct her i, so that euen
then he forsaketh not, but the more
wisely instructeth, that euerie one

e Pro. 3. 15.
f Isa. 46. 9.
g Ioh. 13. 1.
h Iam. 1. 12.
i Wis. 3. 6.

may

The fourth booke

may see what he is of himselfe, and how farre he is come forward (in religion.)

O my beloued, thou art all faire & louely, but not to the flesh, but to the minde; nor to the eye or sense, but to the faithfull soule, to him which hath
Mat. 5. 8 a pure heart, to him which is altogether addicted vnto things intibible
1. cor. 4. 18 and spirituall.

So that whoso desireth to be vnted to thee by a religious affection, he must of necessity mortifie in himselfe all fleshly motions, and aboue all retaine a pure conscience. For thou art much displeased then, when a man doth go vnto fraile creatures to seek consolation.

And therefore thou callest me inwardlie to loue thee, and thou
Luk. 14. 27 commandest that I waite for thee: for then I shall finde thee, when I doe humble my selfe, and with that which thou wilt.

And this shall bee all my felicitie, euen freely to serue thee, neyther dreading any losse, nor seeking any gaine: because thou allowest that soule which purely doth loue.

Mat. 10. 7 Oh blessed is hee, which both in life and death sticketh onely to thee!

but

the Imitation of Christ.

But as for me I am far-away cast
oftentimes from thy favor, by louing,
and that both inordinatelie, and vn-
discreetely, transitorie things. But
that I may not perish with them, I
with all speede will returne, and be-
hold in them thy glorie, and direct
all my cogitations to thee-ward.

O my Lord, & God, which of no-

thing hast made all things p, giue
me grace for all things to praise thy
name.

For all power q, wisdom r, good-
nes and mercy, is thine s; thine also
is euerlasting glorie and maiestie.
Thy kingdome is an euerlasting
kingdome; and thy dominion in-
dureth throughout all ages.

Thou orderest all things x, both
things aboue, and things in earth.

Thou knowest all things y, and
possessest all things z; nothing doth
resist a, or trouble thee: but quietly
thou rulest the world, and makest the
rebellious to stoope, and to serue b.

Thou art priuie of all things which
are done in the world c; and before
they were done thou knewest their
endes d.

Thou art the God both of heauen
and earth e, the creatour of things

o Ro. 1. 21

p Gen. 1. 1

2. & c.

q Ioh. 1. 1. 2

r Act. 17. 24

s Reu. 4. 8

t Iam. 1. 17

u Mat. 19. 17

v Reu. 7. 12

w Psal. 145. 13

x Wisd. 8. 1

y Ecclu. 23

z Psal. 95. 4

a Eccles. 9. 1

b dan. 4. 32

c Wisd. 12

3. 4. & c.

d Dan. 9. 3.

e 12.

f Ecclu. 23

g 19.

h Isa. 46. 10

i Ezra. 5. 11

The fourth booke

f Psal. 89. visible and inuisible f, the gouernor
 11. of the whole world g, and the dispo-
 Psal. 115. ser of the seasons h.
 15 O blesse thy seruants, I beseech
 g Psal. 47. thee, disperfed far and wide ouer the
 1.2.6.&c. world, yet feruing thee most religi-
 h Ezech. 43. ously. Make them (constantly) to
 7.6.&c. found forth thy praise, and in all pla-
 ces with one voice to glorifie thy
 name.

Stir vp their hearts firmly to loue
 thee; and graunt that all their enter-
 prises may take a good ende.

Oh, how gracious, and how good
 i 1. cor. 2.9 art thou to such as loue thee; I how
 k psal. 34.8 sweete art thou to them which taste
 thee k!

They which haue smelt thy sweet-
 nes, know thereby the better how
 both to thinke and speake. For thy
 sweetnesse surpasseth all sweetnesse;
 and thy pleasures doe sweeten all bi-
 ternesse.

O Lord my God, holie men haue
 spoken, and Prophets haue talked
 of thee.

All the godlie from the worlds
 beginning haue beleued in thee,
 haue serued thee, haue glorified
 thee both with sacrifices and oblati-
 ons, they haue praised and blessed
 thee

of the Imitation of Christ.

thine holy name; because they haue
both acknowledged thee to bee the
Creator and maker of the vniuersall
world, and also trusted in thee about
all things? 1 Heb. 11. 2
3. &c.

They haue knowen thee in their
visions, for thou hast revealed thy
name to them; and beside thee they
knewe no God. They obserued the
lawe of thy commandements, which
thou gauest them.

They followed not the foolish ima- m 1. Tim.
1. 17.
n Act. 17.
24.
ginations of false Gods: but they
worshipped thee which liuest for e-
uer, the Creator of all things.

They lifted vp their voice to thee Heb. 1. 3
o Ex. 3. 14
p Isa. 43. 10
with thanksgiving: because from on
high thou soundest in their eares, say-
ing, *I am that I am. Before me there
was no God formed, neither shall there
be after mee.* I haue ordained the
things which shall bee, and I forget
not whatsoever is past.

This when they heard and vnder-
stood, they cast the eies of their faith
afarre off, beleeuing that God will
saue vs, and that he which shall come,
will come, and will not tarrie,

q Heb. 10

Knowing these things aforehand 37
they were not a little comforted, and

The fourth booke

maruellously astonished, at the presence of the glorie to come, they fainted. But afterward comming by little and little to themselves, & with ioy beholding the power of God approaching, they saide, He is, euen he is the Lord our God, and we haue none other. Hee hath taken vs, and hee will saue vs. Hee cannot denie himselfe, because hee is faithfull. As we haue heard, so we haue seene: as we haue blessed, so wee haue spoken, and borne witness to the truth.

12. Tim. 2. 13. Once the Lord did speake, and it was done. Hee said, My counsaile shall stand, but yours shall come to naught, O ye sonnes of men.

1. 3. 1. Ioh. 3. 11. Woe vnto them which imagine euill, and afterward make a scosse at the word of God!

upsa. 33. 9. Woe vnto you which doe faine a religion out of your owne braine, and are exalted in your owne power!

1. Ioh. 3. 11. Hear the Word of the Lord, ye which serue the Lord: know ye that he hath a controuersie with the inhabitants of the earth.

a Hos. 4. 1. To turne away your selues, it is not good; stand yee therefore and consider

of the Imitation of Christ.

consider his waies.

Returne you and come vnto him,
so will hee ioyfully receiue you into
fauour; for the Lord is gracious and
mercifull b.

Hee keepeth not his anger as man b Ex. 32. 6
doth'e, but pardoneth all sinnes, yea c Iona. 4. 2
and morrouer he restoreth the for- Hos. 11. 9
mer grace with the later.

Onely returne you with all your
harts: and dedicate your selues whol-
lie and vnfeinedly to his seruice.
Thus doe the Saints speake in mine
eares.

That which musick is at a banquet,
and sweete smelling frankincense in
a censar: euen that is the word of
God in a pure heart.

And thy Saints, Lord, filled with
thy spirit, haue thus sounded forth the
memorie of thine abundant sweetness;
and haue left their words vnto vs to
be sounded abroad.

But my speech often time is stop-
ped, so that it hath no passage to as-
cend. But if that fire come from a-
boue, then shall my tongue be hot: &
if it once bee inflamed, I shall forth-
with be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the
presence thereof; for as the winde

The fourth booke

driue away chaffe, so shall sorrow be expelled from the heart. And as the rust by the fire: so shall my finnes be consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth all things, shall sweepe the floore of mans heart. Descende, and get vp; touch me a little and I shall see.

Things passed shall be as though they had neuer beene, and that to come shall not be accompted of; for all finnes shall vtterly be forgotten.

Old things shall passe away, newe shall come abundantly; holie desires shall increase, and rise vp on all sides, wheresoeuer the good spirit shall blowe.

Feare shall depart, loue shall possess the hearts of all; all affliction shall cease: for this alteration is by the hand of God.

Therefore that which I say, is not to mine owne but to his praise.

The pensine hath comfort; the hungry, bread; the thirstie, drinke;

The sick are healed; the wauering assisted; the weak strengthened; the wearie, quieted; the hopelesse, comforted; the complainer, pitied;

To the blinde sight; to the wandering, a ready way; to the knocker the

the gate is opened.

He which doubted, is now resolved; he which staggered, is now strengthened; he that diligently enquired, is now entertained ioyfully by mother charitie. The friend cometh more ioyfully to mee, than is the soule desirous to speake with him.

Lo now am I present, saith hee, say **L.**
 on, what newe thing hath fallen out?
 What, haue you forgotten what you
 are to suffer and to doe for my sake?

Yet this staied me not, being desirous to goe forward with him. So **B.**
 straight-way I mounted aloft, and
 forgot all mine affliction.

He would not by and by discomfort the partie so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should be performed.

Thy desire is good, and request vnto mee doth like me well: notwithstanding, it may not presently be granted. **L.**

Go thy way, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the Lord hath done for thee.

Saie vnto them, Prepare your
E 4 harts

The fourth booke

hearts euerie one of you; and lay
downe the heauie burden of sinne
and be ye warie, and strong to resist

d Iam. 4. 7 the snares of Satan d.

c Mat. 26

Watch and pray, least yee fall into
temptatione.

41.

Mark. 14

I will come shortly, looke that I
finde you readye.

38.

Lo, I haue warned you afore hand

CHAP. 11.

1. The desire of the soule after God.

2. The properties of God by the sundry
titles ascribed vnto him. 3. None
commeth vnto God, vntill
God draweth him.

apl. 35. 3



My vnto my soule, I am
thy salvation 2.

Oh, of what excel-
lencie art thou, my
soule, what wonderfull
virtue is hidden in thee, that thou
canst neuer be at rest, vntill thou haue
attained perfect happines, and found
the last end which thou so desirest I
which once being knowne and found
out, the care is gone.

Oh happinesse above all happi-
nes; O end without end, when shall I
both

of the Imitation of Christ.

both without measure, & everlasting-
ly enjoy thee.

I finde many good things in this
world. But they continue not, nei- b 1. Cor. 7.
ther doe they satishie my desire c. 31.

But one thing is necessarie d. This 1. Iohn. 1.
one thing is that I seeke; this one 15. 16.
thing I desire. c Eccles 1.

For one thing are all things e; and 8.
of one thing are all things f. If I get d Lu. 10.
this thing, I shall be content: but if I 42.
enioye it not, I shall continually be c Isai. 43. 7
tossed, because many things cannot f Gen. 1. 1
satishie me. 2, &c.

What is this one thing? I am not Iohn 1, 1. 3
able to say what it is; sure I am I de-
fire that, than which, nothing either
is or may be imagined either better
or greater g.

For this is not one thing among g Eph. 46. 5
many things; but one thing, about 6. &c.
all things b. And it is my G O D, to Iob 41. 1
whom if I sticke, I shall doe well; 2. &c.

To him I say, to him I cry, when I h Ezra. 5. 11
say, Saie vnto my soule, I am thy saluati- i Psal. 73. 8
on k. k Psal. 35. 3

O my soule, my longing soule,
what more desirest thou? Is it not
better for thee to cleaue vnto one
thing, than vnto many things? Of
one thing are many things l, but l Act. 17. 24

The fourth booke

one thing is not of many things.

Cease to seeke many things, ioining
theeto one, stick vnto one : for in
one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold
and diuers outward things : but doo
thou seeke one inward good thing,
and it is sufficient.

Mat. 22 Do, this man seeketh a farme m;
that man trauelleth about his mar-
Luk. 14. 18 chandle; another heaperh vp much
gold and siluer; another hunteth af-
ter pleasures and preferment; ano-
ther visiteth his friends and kindred;
another is merrie with his acquai-
tance; another rideth vnto cities
and castles; another dooth long to
see diuers countries of the world; a-
nother desireth wisdom; another
preferment, another principallitie, a-
nother a kingdome: and thus one
wisheth one thing, another man ano-
ther thing, euen as well among the
spirituall sort, as among the secular.
But fewe doe thinke one thing, and
(other things) purchie and sumple
for one thing. And therefore they
neither dooe finde any sure peace;
nor yet saue the inward grice of the
spirit.

For so many as are (the seruants)

of

of the Imitation of Christ.

of Christ, dooe conet not temporall,
nor earthly things n, as though they n Col. 3. 2
were then iolly & glorious fellows,
if they abounded therewith.

What then ? Wilt thou say that
the things which they seeke for, doe
touch thee, O deuout soule? in truth
thou canst not.

For my part, I detest all these
things: for my good thing is but one
thing; I loue but one thing, I require
but one thing; and this one thing is
better to mee than all other things
either in heauen or in earth.

If thou hast founde such a good
thing, my counsell is, that you hold
and keepe it for whole sake you haue
contemned all things. For hauing
that, it shall not grieue you to want
other things; nay, you will iudge it
reason for the getting therof, that
you dooe both giue o, and suffer all o Phil. 3. 8
things p. p Rom. 8

Now therefore, O my soule, seeke 35. 38.
thou after so singular, and superex-
cellent a good thing.

So long as you live in the flesh, you
are of necessitie to seeke: because
that cannot too carefully bee sought
for, which can at no time sufficiently q 1. Cor. 2
be comprehended q. 9.

But

The fourth booke

But then shall you cease seeking, when the houre of enioying is once come. For then shall he be all in all, even hee which alone is all-sufficient for all, and euery man.

1 Cor. 15
28.

And although there, too, he must be sought, where he is continually found: yet is hee not there sought with labor, as in this world, but with surpassing pleasure, and loue.

1 Cor. 13
13.

What he is in this life to the godly, it may bee declared by his manifold titles: and such as haue experience (of his goodnes) knowe very well how it may be shoven.

Notwithstanding, consider what the names of God are, as I haue learned them in the schoole of experience: I wil recite a few, but the grace (of his Spirit) may put you in minde of many moe beside.

1 Mat. 9. 15 Loe, hee is a Spouse, to such as
Deu. 6. 13 loue; but to such as still serue him in
Mat. 4. 10 feare, a dreadfull Lord.

x Mat. 6. 9. Hee is a Father to good children
y 2 Ti. 4. 8. x; but to the obstinately wicked, a
He. 12. 23. seuerer Iudge.

2 Mat. 9. 12 To the sick, he is a Physician, &
Iohn 6. to the whole, wholesome food.

55. 56. To the ignorant, a teacher, and
Ioh. 7. 16 to the obedient, an everlasting Sa-

uiour.

of the Imitation of Christ.^a

iour c.

c Mat. 1. 21

Hee is the way d for beginners, d Ioh. 14. 6
the truth for proceeders, the life e Ioh. 1. 25
for the absolute performers of his ho-
ly will.

Hee is the hope f of repenters, and f Col. 1. 27
a surpassing comforter g of the righ- 1. Tim. 1. 1
teous. g Ioh. 14.

He is a crowne h for the humble, 26.
and a punishment i for the proude. h Luk. 2. 32

In darknes hee is a light k; and i Ro. 9. 33
in the night a lantern l. k Ioh. 1. 8. 9

Hee giueth medicine to the disea- Iohn 3. 19
sed soules, and much wine of com- I Ioh. 8. 12
fort, to the sorrowfull. i. Iohn. 1. 5

With such as stand to the battell,
he standeth; with such as proceede
in their iourney, he walketh; with such
as feruently make haste, hee run-
neth; with such as mount in diuine
contemplation, hee flieth.

Doe you pray? he is present with
you. Doe you reade? he is talking
with you. Doe you meditate? hee is
full with you.

One and the same GOD worketh
in all these things, shewing himsele
to euery one, euen as hee thinketh
good: in his words there is no fault,
and his works are past finding out.

For great and vnsearchable are
his

The fourth booke

m Ro. 11. his iudgements **m**, and no man is to
33. saie vnto him, Why doost thou so?
 or why dost thou chuse this man?
m Isai. 45. 9 ther then that man **m**?

10. 11. It is folly for a man to reason **a**.
Rom. 9. 20 gainst the Almighty: and all the will
21. &c. of Adams children is vaine, and to
 no purpose.

How like you these things, & how
 dooth God saue vnto you?

S. He saue me sweete vnto me; nei-
 ther am I offended at his workes.

a psal. 19. He is righteous **a**, and who can
237. rebuke him of ill dealing?

p Iob. 8. 46 He that so dooth, dooth let him-
 self against God, and shall be reproo-
 ued of his irreprehensible light.

M. But what thou hast heard, what is
 it in his presence? scarce vndoubtedly
 so much as a sparke, without that
 which is hidden with in.

Aske you what that is? I must say,
 I knowe it not, it is altogether above
 my capacitie, even as a certain cloud
 far off; whole beginning and end are
 vnknown.

And therefore meditate rather, &
 thinke more often vpon the base hu-
 manitie of Iesus, and do not mount
 vp too high; least of his glorious ma-
 iestic you be confounded.

But.

Cap. 12 87 None runneth except God draweth
of the Imitation of Christ.

But forsomuch as burning loue
both now and then forget all reue-
nace and feare, you are in that re-
(spect) the more to be borne withall,
sometime, being extremely set on
fire with the loue of Iesus, you doe
consider not onely how hee cried in q Luk. 2.6
the manger q, and how hee hanged r Mat. 27
vpon the crosse r: but also how hee 3 1.3 2. &c.
sigheth now in heaven all glorious- f Phil. 1.9
ly s, and ruleth all things vnder hea- 10.
uen most wonderfully s. r Rev. 1.5.

O most louelie Iesu, gladly doe I
follow thee in earth; but more glad- S
lie would I follow thee vnto heauen;

Where my treasure is, there would
mine heart be also.

u Mat. 6.21

Oh, thou art my treasure, thou
which art at the right hand of the fa-
ther s, art deerer vnto mee then any
creature. For my sake thou wast in-
carnate, for my sake thou wast ele-
uate.

x Ro. 8. 34
Heb. 1.3

Thou diddest leaue thy selfe an
example vpon earth y; thou keepest
thy selfe for a reward in the heauens; 15.

y Ioh. 13.

Vpon thee therefore mine eyes are
fixed, and after thee doe my feete
trace. To thee mine heart saith, My
face seeketh thee O Lord, I will con-
sionally seek thy face z.

1. Pet. 2.28

z Psa. 27.8

Q.

The fourth Booke

a Iob. 13. 24. O Lord how long wilt thou hide the sight of thy glorie? Whie hidest thou thy face, and takest mee for thine enemy?

Thou knowest right well, my mind will be distracted hither and thither, and be diuerslie bent, vntill it be fast ioyned to thee her friende in the heauens.

b Sal. S. 8. 6. 7. For the force of loue knoweth not how to bee quiet: but vncessantly maketh inquirie of her louer, sendeth forth messengers and doubleth prayers: neither doth it so giue over, because loue will altogether possesse that which it desireth.

c Sal. S. 1. 3. Therefore drawe mee, that I may begin zealouslie to runne after thee. I had neede to be drawne, and with great force to be drawne. For **d Ioh. 6. 44.** valesse thou draw, none will come, none will follow: because every one is naturally inclined to himselfeward.

But if thou once drawe, lo then I doo hasten, then I run, then I wait not. But if thou doe not drawe, I doe neither runne, nor seeke, yea scarce haue I any desire at all to followe. If thou reach out thine hand, I doe run so much the more swiftly, as thou

of the Imitation of Christ.

thou forceably dost drawe.

This is the voice of my louer draw-

ing e, *And when I am lift vp from the e Ioh. 12*
earth, I will drawe all men vnto mee. 32.

O sweete Iesu, drawe mee after
 thee: and then not I onely, but all
 shall run after thee by the sauer of
 thine ointments f.

f Sal. S. 1.

First therefore drawe me after thee, 3.3.

then let others follow, seeing an ex-
 ample of good life.

But, that we may not waxe proud,
 it is good that we marke this withal,
 how that wee began to runne, not
 through our owne strength, but by
 the sauer of thine ointments.

This is the heauenly drawing,
 without which no man can goe for-
 ward, no not so much as begin, as
 likewise thou diddest say g: *No man g Ioh. 6.*
can come vnto mee, except my father 44.
drawe him.

So that whom the father draweth,
 he followeth thee, and forsaketh him
 selfe.

He seemed to be well drawne that
 said h: *Master I will follow thee, whi- h Mat. 8.*
ther sooner thou goest. But euerie one 19.
 hath not the gift to bee so affected: *Luk. 9. 57*
 neither is it a weake stomach that can
 so readily follow thee vnto all things.

What

The fourth Booke

What leste hast thou O my soule,
that thou dost not forsake all for Ie-
sus sake? why so vnwillingly doe you
depart from vaine and transitorie
things? What good can these world-
ly things doe you?

Beholde, while you passe by mor-
tall things, and visible creatures, wil-
ling to delight your self in them, you
forget better things. While you so
doe, you seuer your selfe from the to-
ueraine good thing, and turne your
minde from the true, blessed, and e-
ternall life.

And therefore you shall continue
miserable and wretched, full of griefe
and vexation.

1 Eccle. 2.

27.

Forturne your selfe on which side
you will, and you shall finde matter
of continuall sorrow, and much tedi-
ousnes, vntill thou turne againe vnto
thy creator, because he is thy peace,
and secure quietnesse.

1 Ioh. 6. 33

But, if thou neither make staie in
earthly things, nor fasten thy foote
in the mire, but rather beholde and
worship in the glasse of worldly crea-
tures, not the figure which passeth a-
waie, but him whose image and su-
perscription it is, blessed art thou, and
shalt neuer die.

1 Cor. 7. 31

in Re. 21. 4

For

of the Imitation of Christ.

For when thou seekest after these
visible things not to enioy them,
but beholdest them to the ende to
glorifie the name of thy Creator, by
making to thy selfe of his best and
barest works a kind of ladder where-
withall thou maiest ascende, thou
shalt be deliuered so from thy filthie
bowels of this world, and throughly
be coupled to thy desired ende,

which is about all things

the blessed God for

euert and euert.



Chap.

CHAP. 13.

1. How, and when the soule and God
are vnited together. 2. The miserie
where God is not
present.

a psa. 63. 8



Y Soule cleaueth vnto
thee a.

O my God, the true
comforter, thou
knowest how thou
likest me well, and
how I take pleasure daily to be tal-
king with thee secretly alone.

But where may I seeke thee, if hap-
pely I doe misse thee for an houre?
who shall bring me vnto thee?

b Isa. 46. 9

c Mat. 6. 9

Thou art God aboue all things b;
and I beneath all things a miserable
man. Thou art in heauen c, & I in the
world. Thou art most high, but I am
poore and a begger.

Who euer hath measured the di-
stance betweene heauen and earth?
Far asunder bee they: but farder art
thou fro me, O God.

Who therefore shall vnite mee to
thee? either thou must doe it, or none
can.

But

of The Imitation of Christ.

But if thou wilt, it may speedily be done. And thou knowest, how of my selfe I may easily fall: but that I doe stand, and goe forward, it is of thy goodnes.

So that my soule dependeth vpon the grace of thy spirit, and of the infusion of thy speciall fauour.

If thou command, it shall be lifted vp from the earth: but if thou turne away thy face, it shall be greatly troubled.

But of thy wanted fauor and mercie receiue mee; & let thy right hand guide me wonderfully vnto thee.

Hearc this, all yee people *d*, giue *d* ps. 49. 1
 ye all yee that dwell in the world;
 for it is an easie thing with God to bring it to passe, as it is written, that the rich and poore may be all one.

I am poore, and lack many things; but this my God is rich, and wanteth nothing *e*.

And although noe great experience, yet I haue an vndoubted testimonie to prooue that the soule through grace may bee vnited to God. *e* Psal. 50
 11. 12.

My beloued is mine, saith he f, and f Sal. S. 2
in his, he feedeth among the lillies. 16.

This

The fourth booke.

This is the testimony of the friend,
& his dearling; of the bridegroome,
and the spouse : and it is a verie fit,
and a strong testimonie of the holy
lawe.

1oh. 17.

21.

The next is like to this *g. I will
that they all may be one, as thou, O fa-
ther, art in mee, and I in thee.*

Beholde the notable testimonies
of two books, whereby it plainly ap-
peareth, that the soule, through spe-
ciall grace from aboue, may be link-
ed familiarly vnto God.

And although it rarely come so to
passe : yet is it dearely to be accoun-
ted of, and not altogether vnknowne
to the louer. And againe, though re-
vie hardly : yet may it fall out.

The soule therefore so conioyned
to God, let no man dare to separate,
or to trouble.

If thou dost wonder at this mar-
uelous vnion, wonder thou and mar-
uel at the excellencie of his goodnes,
and at the strange & singular uniting
of the humane bodie (to his God-
head.)

He may doe what he will, which
onely doth great wonders *b.*

h Pf. 136.4

If thou lookest for merits, thou
shalt

of The Imitation of Christ.

shall kinde, it is his good pleasure to have it so.

O sweet societie with Christ, and vnder the wings of Christ!

O gracious coniunction, full of loue, and sweetness of the holy ghost, the which is perceined better than vttered!

These things belong vnto the soule that is estranged from all worldly matters, and is not delighted with this present life: but is carried aloft in godly meditation.

The more the louer knoweth this, the more am I ignorant. Notwithstanding, gladly would I be in presence when the deuout soule is in such an happie case.

And then is she so, when the spouse and she is together at the noone day. But then it fareth ill with her, and that verie ill too, if it happen that Iesus bee away; if the perfumes of grace run not from aboue; if no pleasure she take in the holy Bible; if it bee irksome for her to continue in prayer and godly meditation; if the clouds of the heart be so thicke, and hurtfull cogitations doe so preuaile, that they cannot be restrained, but do labor to ouerwhelme in a maner all.

The fourth booke

all the former good things.

O Lord God, why dost thou so? What plaie is this? O blessed Iesus, what meane you herreby?

If it were not offensive to thine honour, I could wish to haue farther communication betweene thee, and thy beloued.

Forasmuch as shee is so greatly desirous of thy gracious presence, whereby shee may be nourished with chaste delights, I doe much muse why sometime you suffer her to sit so desolate. Thou passest by, and goest thy way, as though shee had no desire vnto thee. But she is alone all peniue. For thus she saith in effect; *With my soule haue I desired thee in the night.*

i Hsa. 26.9

It is night with her, when thou, the true light, art not present. So that shee prayeth for thy presence, that the darknesse of sinne comprehend her not. For shee feeleth manifold discommodities when thy gracious visitation, is taken from her. For, had she not suffered somewhat, she had neuer so earnestly cried vnto thee.

Another also, which was before
k Psa. 63.8 Iude, cried thus *My soule thirsteth*
vnto

unto thee.

But I thinke no trouble is or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no maruell, if through this want the weiward soule dooe languish away in sorrow. For thou art verie hardly found at any time; and being found, she reioyceth at thy returne, hoping to spend the day merrily with thee: but thinking little of thy departure, she suspecteth no aduersitie to come. But handling another matter secretly, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest suddainlie out of her hands, when shee cannot lay hold vpon thee.

I doe praise thee: but in this how shall I praise thee? if thou hast any praise and sweetnesse, why doe you seeme to forgoe it in this deed?

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But shee can take none offence at thee, who so mightily dost loue her.

If therefore any good reason bee signified vnder that lesson, O God shew it me.

For gladly would I vnderstand the same: neither doe I thinke it vnneccessary

The fourth booke

sarie to learne though it be but little.

Because no man of himselfe can behold thy secret iudgements: but it is thy light which dooth both lighten darke, and driue away hurtfull things.

What therefore may the cause bee that sometime so secretly you withdrawe your selfe from the soule, then not witting thereof?

Doe you loue her, or no? If you doe loue her, why then do you leave her, my beloved? If you loue her not, why then haue you visited her before time? Againe, if you loue her not, why doe you make returne, why knocke you at the doore, why enter you in againe? What, is it of lightnesse that you doe so both goe and returne? God forbid.

But so often change dooth not a little greeue her; yea much it dooth disquiet her. Yet the griefe would be the lesse, if thou wouldest say plain-
lie I, I doe goe, and will come: yet your heartes shall reioyce, and your joy no man shall take from you.

1 Ioh. 14. 18

m Ioh. 16

22.

But now you cast out neuer a byword; onely shee thinketh vpon that speech, which she well perceiueth to be performed in her selfe, how Iesus

hid

of the Imitation of Christ.

hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple.

n Ioh. 8. 59

A few things I haue against you, but my complaint doth spring out of a good roote. I humbly request to be instructed, I loue not to contend.

And therefore when occasion sereth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soule say for her selfe somewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answers boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy beloved boldly. For thy friend will patiently heare, and meete thee with kinde words, that you may suffer no hinderance.

For if hee bee not thy comforter, who will comfort thee? And who more fauourably will beare thine inimitie, than hee which beareth all things, & yet is not burdened? And to whom more safely can you reueale your miserie, than to him which perfectly knoweth all things?

o Eccclus.

Or in whom may you put more confidence,

33. 19.

than in the truth which deceiueth

p Ioh. 6. 14

Now, if any stranger, or one that is not a friend to the spouse, shall haue these things, let him be driven

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form the doores. But if hee loue the spouse, if hee be faithfull, if deuoute and spirituall, let him haue free ingresse.

¶ If hee be a keeper of good conscience, a louer of vertue and discipline; if hee be pure in heart, and cleere in iudgement; if humble in himselfe, and good towards others; if he can neither wickedly carpe at, vainely extoll, rashly reproboue, impudently maintaine, nor proudly commend things; but contrariwise, if hee haue learned, both the things which hee conceiueth not, to reuerence, and also rightly to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him haue entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the hart through the sound of words ought to be noted, rather than the qualitie of voyces.

¶ And therefore tell me & soule, how dost thou feel thy selfe, wanting now the grace of thy beloued? I for my part do see that hardly I can take it well, if he keepe himselfe long away, and I conceiue the like of you.

¶ If you thinke good, let vs sit heere together, and conferre wee herewith our comfort.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 8.

1. A lamentation of the soule for
the want of grace.



*My heart breaketh
for desire 2.*

What ist thou saist?
Why saist thou, Zi-
on, the Lord hath
forsaken me.

2 Psa. 119
20

Feare not daughter Sion, thou lo-
ving & religious soule: lo thy king,
and welbeloued friend commeth to
thee.

Arise, stand vp, and behold the ioy
which commeth toward thee from
thy God.

S. I haue sought, faith the soule, &
haue not founde, I haue called, and
he hath not answered, and therefore
I doe breake for thought.

b Can. 3. 2

M. Then said I, this is the voyce
of the Turtle hauing lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was
yesterday, and erewhile, when you
sing the songs of myrth.

S. The morning is past, night com-
meth, and the spouse resteth him-
selfe at noone tide: yet may I not

The fourth booke
come nigh him.

M. Your words are sorrowfull, and your eyes shed teares. O soule, thou art griued, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence cometh your grieve?

S. I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or any worldly matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead, and crucified to the world.

M. If' bee not deceined, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectly you haue denied the same, and are come euery vnto a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

S. Verie fewe haue that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

M. Why therefore are you so pensive? What haue you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you doe well to be sad: neither should you take delight in any thing, vntill he returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you sustaine your selfe vpon the bed of griefe, O sweet soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway present

of the Imitation of Christ.

present at a wish. Therefore while he is absent, what comfort haue you, wherein doe you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, bee they neuer so grievous.

That you beare the absence of Christ heauilie, no man doubteth, but he onely that loneth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for this world, but for the spouse Christ. And I know full well that when hee shall returne, you will bee merry againe: because hee will not alwaies forget you. For he hath said, *I will not leave you comfortlesse, but I will come to you.* Ioh. 14. 18

Therefore your words are not vain, beeing vttered with such griefe, but they declare a louing heart, and strike the cold affection, which is not inflamed with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Turtle, not the crying of a murmurer. And therefore I trust, you shall finde him; whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demand, What say you of him, whose absence you do so bewaile? Is he good, or no? S. Doubtlesse hee is good, and singularly good too *d. righteous, and* d Mat. 19. 16.

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e Iob. 34.

10.

f 1. Pet. 2.

21.

faithfull, in him there is no wicked-
nesse, neither can bee.

M. Why therefore lament you for
the good, in whom is no deceit?

S. I weep not for the good, in respect
that hee is good : but I lament mine
owne miserable condition, because
I haue lost a good and faithfull
friend.

I, euen I haue deserued this : but
alas, alas that I kept not his fauor !

By the lacke, I haue now learned
what I haue lost. And the absence of
a friend sheweth, what his presence
did good.

I was merrie and iocund with him:
but I did no whit consider of his
speedy departure.

He came skipping vpon the moun-
taines, hee was ioyfull and iocund
in the porches of mine house. And
straightway I vnlocked the doores
of the flesh, and let in the beloued
vnto me. I did sit, and rested with
vnder his shadow from the haile and
raine. And it did me much good to
haue his company.

Why should I not reioyce? He is
my ioye, and the comfort of mine
heart.

Ahy, what had I? And what then
did

of the Imitation of Christ.

did I possesse?

I am not able to vtter, how well I prospered then; neither is it conuenient that I should. I could not desire more then I had, hee being present whom alone I loued.

Oh, how did I loue, when I despised both my selfe, and all things beside!

I had either little or no care at all of any thing that might delight me; for I was ranshed with loue of him, and whatmeuer was not my beloued I loathed as altogether vsuorie. But he being taken away, I am in a manner cleane out of heart.

For my soule depended vpon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I do thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth indeed.

As I would, so was he; and whatsoeuer he enioyned me, I tooke it in good part, and I consecrated my selfe whollie and frankly to his will. So that there was a good agreement, & great quietnesse betweene vs.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

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L. I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stir not vp, nor waken my Loue, vntill shes please.

S. Now therefore note, if you be able to conceiue my words, what great cause I haue to lament the absence of my friend, by whose presence I began to bee so rich with all good things.

M. Heereunto I answered; I know well what you say: by often experience I haue prooued so much as you speake.

But let vs comfort our selues in this, that the dispensation of his will is the increase of our zeale, and deuotion.

And now I haue receiued with thankfulness that which you haue vttered: notwithstanding, I would more throughly haue them

beaten into mine head. For

they which be hard of

conceiuing, are of

ten to be told of

a matter.

Chap.

of the Invitation of Christ.

CHAP. 15.

1. Touching the fruit of friendship.

2. The benefits of Christ upon man. 3. The true felicitie and ioy of the soule,

4. The affinitie betweene Christ and the soule of man.



*Raised bee God
which hath not put
back my prayer fro
me.*

2 p^{er} 66. 20.

Therefore I am now again zealous-ly to enquire, if your friend at any time left you without inward comfort.

What meane you? What muse you heere about? How also may hee be reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all friendship, I beseech you, O deare & beloued soule to Christ, conceale none of these things which I am to demand of you.

You may so doe me a pleasure, in opening to me your godly cogitations.

By your talke, I shall bee able to measure the waight of my griefe, whether iustly or without cause I was penitue.

The fourth booke

For I haue leene you sometime merrie, and sometime sad, and by and by glad againe, and by you I did somewhat consider of my selfe.

But I suppose the chiefest cause of this your alteration is, that returning and departure of the beloved. The which hath made mee, perceiving how you have run ouer many matters, for mine instruction to resort vnto you.

S. According to your desire, I will bend my selfe somewhat to vnfolde the things which I feele within mee, both when I am with my friend, and also when I am alone, looking for him whom I so do loue.

This first vnderstand, I reape not so much ioy and pleasure by his presence, but I find as much sorrow & bitterness through his absence.

But why it pleaseth him so to come and go, rather I had he should declare than I.

But you shall heare it when I haue finished the wordes of my song, because in the ende wee will bring him in vnto vs: and sitting among vs, hee shall teach vs his order, the which becometh to shew vnto such as desire his presence.

of the Imitation of Christ.

In the meane while giue attentive
care vnto mee, and bee not offended
at mine homely speech.

For wee are now come together
to stirre vp our hearts, and either to
weepe together, or through loue to
reioyce together.

For woe vnto him that is alone. **b Ec. 4. 10.**
because when hee falleth into some
sorrow, or temptation, there is not a
second to lift him vp. And if two be
together, they will comfort one the
other, while one being sad, the other
ministreth ioy; or if hee refuse to be
comforted, he shall bee pitied forth-
with, and griefe will be taken for his
griefe: and so it will fall out that ei-
ther they will both be glad, or both
sad together. And although some
sorrow do yet still continue for some
aduersity, or matter of sorrow: yet
the more patiently they beare it, be-
cause their hearts bee so linked, that
nothing can change or alter their
minds.

Now, who seeing this faithful con-
cord of mindes, but must needes
breake into these wordes, and say,
Behold how good, & how comely a thing **epsa. 133. 3.**
it is, brethren to dwell euens together!

And therefore I can the more
boldly,

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boldly tell you what I think, because
I dread no deceit, or subtiltie in
you.

d Wi. 11.

23.

e Aq. 17.

22.

Lo, this all sweet spouse, and best
beloued friend, our Lord Iesus
Christ, the loue of holie soules, & e-
uen of pure loe, not able other-
wise to doe, allured me vnto him; and
when I was not, hee gaue mee life, &
wisdom and power to beholde this
common light.

Hee gaue me grace to bee borne
anew by Baptisme, and adorned
me with the robe of his precious
merits.

Ouer and besides, when afterward
I had foully bespotted my selfe with
sinne, and was far vnsure to loue him,
he cast not his eye on my filthinesse,
but vpon the side of his mercies.

f Ro. 8. 30

For when as yet I wandered out of
the way, he reclaimed me of his good-
nes, not suffering mee to perish in
this wicked world.

Moreouer, he hath prouided mee
a place to rest in so long as I liue in
this mortall bodie.

Notwithstanding, this dwelling
vnder the shadow of the beloued, is
not the true rest, nor the rest which
shall for euer continue: but that is the

the

of the Imitation of Christ.

the true rest, which wee shall feele
after the labors of this present life g. Recu. 21. 4

Yet for the soule to perceiue her
selfe to bee vaburdened of worldlie
cares, and there to rest where shee
may the more fullie serue her belo-
ued, and attend vpon him in the se-
cret chamber of silence, it is a kind
of comfort.

Furthermore, my friend hath nor
left, but assisted mee in my diuers
troubles, and sore tentations.

Also hee hath both instructed mee
oftentimes with profitable sermons,
and confirmed me in his word.

And as young plants are wont to
be watered with shoures: so he hath
watered mee with inward comfort,
that the vertue newly implanted
within me may not wither.

L. And he said to me, If thou hast a
lust vnto mee, and wilt hearken vnto
mee, thou shalt enioy good things;
if thou wilt doe whatsoever I com-
mand thee, thou art a friend of mine. h Iohn 15.

If thou wilt choose mee, and loue
me about all things, all things that
you aske, my father will giue you:
but if you forgoe me, then shalt thou
come to destruction, for my wrath
shall bee incensed against thee; if
thou

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thou seekest after another, he shal not
 please thee long, but thou wilt loath
 and abhor him. Because I am the sal-
 nation, and the life of the soule.

i. Ioh. 14. 6

Ioh. 11. 25

S. So I turned me vnto him which
 had don me good, & expelling from
 out my selfe the dust of earthly af-
 fections, I decreed in mine hart from
 thenceforth to serue him onely: be-
 cause I found nothing better than
 him, nor could imagine no covenant
 more profitable.

Let others iet, and seeke what
 friendship they will else where, I am
 thoroughly perswaded this is the true
 man of the soule, for vvhose sake
 mee thinks I could gladly forsake
 this world, to enioy his loue euer-
 lastingly.

And therefore I stucke vnto him,
 for he liked me still; neither could I
 finde a better friend.

For my soule alway hath excee-
 dingly desired such a one, as is the
 greatest for power, the best for good-
 nes, the worthiest for dignitie, and
 the most happy for all good things.

And because he is verie curteous,
 hee gaue mee comfortable words,
 warily foreseeing that they should
 neither terrifie, nor breake mee
 through.

of the Imitation of Christ.

through ouer-much roughnesse, but rather enioyne and teach mee that which should bee both light, and sweete to be borne, that so my yong affection might the better be drawne on, and the more forceably addicted to the friend beloued, and shrink not backe.

M. She shall the better, said he, bee instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenesse she be prouoked forward. She wil the more easily receiue my yoake rather by loue with rewards, than by feare with punishment. And if she neede impulsion, let it wisely bee vled, that violence do not ouerthrowe her.

For he knew right well what was best for a yong plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring vnto mee, especially at the time of tryall, when I should easily call into my remembrance the good things which at the first he did vnto my soule, and thereby take courage to proceede in the battell.

Hee would not straightway open vnto me, what & how much trouble I was to endure in his seruice; but sometime hee tempered aduersitie with prosperitie, wel considering my weake.

The fourth booke

weaknes at the first, vntill through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction.

After all this he carried me about, instructed, and bore mee vpon his shoulders.

He conducted mee ouer the holy Scripture, & with the heate of his holy Spirit hee armed mee against the wicked tentations of Sathan.

Moreover, hee placed before mine eyes exaples of all the vertues, namely, the holy Patriarches, & Prophets, besides the glorious lights of the new Testament.

Even as a Mother teacheth her little childe, so he instructed me, breaking spirituall shales, and putting the kernels into my iawes, because they were sweet to bee eaten.

Search if you can what they signifie, and where such may be found.

Open the apostolicall booke, read aduisedly, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet Isaiah, & looke into the Gospell, the light of all lights, and marke if they doe not yeelde most pleasant notes of themselves.

In them whatsoever you finde, which

of the Imitation of Christ.

which is obscure, and hard to be vnderstood, that is a nut in a shell.

But if you heare it expounded, and vnderstand that which afore you did not, then broken is the shell, and the sweetnes of the nut doth sauer in the heart. And so are wee to iudge of other darke sentences. Whereby you may behold so many nuts, as you see hidden sentences.

And how, thinke you, did he beare me on his shoulders? That hee did so often as he beheld mine infirmities, and yet neither cast me off, nor despised me, but patiently and mercifully did beare with me 4.

k 2.pet.3.9

Againe, hee did beare mee on his shoulders, when he made other men to beare with mine infirmities, and whatsoener was blame worthy within mee.

Besides, yet more louingly he did beare me on his shoulders, when he bare his crosse vnto the place, called the place of dead mens sculls, where hee was crucified. For then was I a more heauie burthen vnto him, than the crosse was: And my finnes were more grieuous to his bones, than this wood of the crosse to his backe. Because for my sake that crosse was carried,

1 Iohn. 19
17. 18.

m 1. Pet. 2
24.

The fourth booke

n Esa. 53
5.6

carried n, not for his owne sake.

o Luk. 15
4.5. &c.

p Gal. 3.13

Oh, how is he about all things to be loued, and to be worshiped, by whose grace and merits I am thus both found out e, and redeemed p! And therefore he shall be as deare to me, as the child is to his mother.

But well I know, that I am far vnmeet to loue him: Notwithstanding my boldnes cometh from his goodnes. Neither could I doe otherwise but run vnto his most friendly embracements, when he shewd himselfe to kinde vnto me.

q 1 Sam.
18.18

I do wel remember what the Prophet Dauid in a certaine place doth say q.

What am I? and what is my life, or the family of my father in Israel, that I should be sonne in law to the King?

But our affinitie together is much more excellent; than this of Dauid and Saul. Because ours is a pure and sincere kindred, not with flesh and blood, but betweene God himselfe, betweene faith vniuolated, and a good conscience.

r 1 Ioh. 4.4

Of this, did that Disciple whome Iesus loued, speake on this wise:

Greater is hee that is in you, than hee that is in the world.

For

of the imitation of Christ.

For God is loue, and loue bringeth forth this kindred. s. Ioh. 4. 16

Therefore sith Dauid thought himselfe farre vnmeeet to be sonne in lawe vnto an earthly King: much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all Kings, that vouchsafeth to allure me, vile wretch, into his friendship.

So that he hath dealt with me, not according to my deserts, but euen as it seemed good in his mercifull eyes.

Oh blessed, and happy art thou, soule, now thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heavenly loue!

Oh how noble, and free art thou, seeing thou art priuie euen to the sighings of so holy copulation!

But seeing I haue spent many words about the beloued, and yet haue not answered fully vnto your demaund,

let vs now begin afresh, and God grant that our speech may

be both to our comfort & profit.

Chap.

The fourth Booke

CHAP. 16.

1. The more wee loue Christ, the more wee may. 2. Tentation and when.

3. Happinesse of the life to come.

4. How to beare affliction.



Behold, as the eyes of serpents look vnto the hinde of their maistern & as the eyes of a murtherer vnto the hand of her

a p. 112. 3

misfrie, so mine eyes are fixed continually vpon my friend.

Since first I began to loue him, I haue had a great desire to continue with him. And this mine intent liked him well, and hee allowed the same,

b Ioh. 15. 5

saying, He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruite.

But that the truth, the strength, and the purity of my loue might appear, it was behoouefull that I should be scriptured. And so I could not be, vntill he both suffered the same, and hid himselfe.

c Psal. 119
78.

And, because tentation serueth both for the purging of the inner man, and for the fruitfull bringing forth

of the Imitation of Christ,

forth of vertue; and also for the better perceiuing the spirituall graces of God, I was tried, and exercised therewithall.

How strongly and how often hee flang me this way and that way, my God and Lord, which knoweth all secrets *d*, and is a witnesse to euerie priuie cogitation of the heart *e*, and still seeth mee, and perceiueth how I am nothing else but a fraile creature *f*, euen he knoweth right well. *d Ecclias. 13. 19. c Act. 15. 8*

If therefore he had not assisted me, when I was extreemly afflicted, doubtlesse I had perished *g*, beeing readie to fall into the pit of desperation. But he, whose manner is to comfort the troubled in spirit *h*, tooke mercy vpon me. *f Psal. 103. 11. g Psal. 139. 9. h Psal. 34. 8*

For, if God helped & assisted not, who were able to beare so manifold tentations!

And therefore it was of his great mercie that I stood before the face of such troublesome tempests: and also it is of the same his goodnesse, that still I doe stand and fall not.

But heereof I may not vaine-ly boast, so long as I liue in this mortall bodie.

For though I see the element is now

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now cleere, yet doe I not thinke that long it will continue quiet. For the winde suddainly wil arise, & that hap- pelic when we thinke least thereof.

So that by so much I perceiue I do neede my friend his assistance, by how much I perceiue I doe lie open on all sides to troubles.

We shall be quiet no where but in
I Ren. 21.4 heaven, where my friend doth feede his elect with ioy and exultation.

But when there? When can I speak thereof? Scarfe can I think any thing thereof, and that not evidently enough; and enter therein I may not.

Oh that hee would come, and set mee in that all glorious, quiet, and fruitfull pasture of his saints, where neither Sathan is, nor daunger to be feared!

As yet I toile in the sea, and whether I shall ataine vnto the port of saluation by reason of my troubles arising through so many contrarie windes, I am viterly ignorant.

So that I am altogether out of quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a shield and comfort vnto mee, that I shall behold the light of faith; that with-
all

of The Imitation of Christ.

all submission I seeke the fauour of my beloued; that I beare toward him a constant hope; that I will not bee separated from his loue; and that I doe rest vpon his prouidence, and vnsearchable goodnes, more than vpon my selfe.

k Ro. 8. 35

And therefore, though too too often I doe stagger, yea and fall too sometime into sione: yet I am not to despaire, but rather continually to fly vnto him and to cry,

O Lord my G O D, haue mercie vpon mee, and suffer mee not to perish through my manifold temptations, but assist mee faithfully, that valiantly I may resist, and overcome.

Reach out thy right hand vnto the worke of thine owne hands, oh I Iob 14. 7. thou which triest mee by Satan, and Psa 95. 7. settest mee oftentimes on thy left hand.

And if any such temptation shall come, as will stay mee from crying vnto the Lord, then will I sigh from the bottome of mine heart. For he knoweth euen the verie secrets of the heart, and is priuie to the groanings of the spirit. It is not his will, that any one euen of the least should

m psal. 7. 9

n Rom. 8

16, 17.

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o Mat. 18. perish e.

14.

Oh, how great was his goodnes to mee-ward, in that it pleased him to be present with me in my trouble, whē I did not know, nor could mark so much! For often he preserved me from being vtterly giuen ouer vnto my wicked affections.

Through his secret iudgement it came to passe now & then, that I fell, and was soiled euen in trifles, that I might not waxe proud, and be high minded for great things, but learne through humiliation, how I was nothing euen then when I seemed to stand vpright, and to flourish.

p. ps. 19. 73

1. cor. 4. 7

And therefore I wish you not ouer-rashlie, or quickly to commend mee, though I seeme to prosper in your sight, but reserue all praise vntill the good day of my death, yet rather praise the Lord, and not me.

Glue the glorie vnto GOD on high, which assisted mee in all my tentations.

For he deliuered mee of his mercie many a time, when I was taken of mine enemies.

Also when they came as a whirlewinde to destroy mee, hee sent out his arrowes, and scattered them,

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and bee encreased lightnings and appalled them, so that they left me for a time. Because hee would not haue me to bee without that which from time to time he hath acquainted his saints withall.

1 A. 14

So that I had afterward a little quietnesse, and peace, by the meanes of my friend.

Psa. 34. 19

Whereupon I did betake mee not vnto bodily, or worldly, but vnto spirituall ease, beholding the earth a far off, & casting my thoughts vpon the secrets of heauen.

u col. 3. 1. 2

I gaue diligence to see what manner of person I am, and how I might best please him, which had reuealed vnto me so many tokens of loue, far beyond all desertes of mine.

And so much as in me laie, I wished continually for this ioyfull peace, the better to cleaue vnto him, and to serue him the more freely.

But many times the soule hath not her desire: but sometime it is granted, sometime vpon good consideration it is deferred.

For who would not wish still to rest vnder the shade of the beloued, if it might bee graunted him, and if time and place were conuenient;

Chap. 16 135 When God commeth, sing forth
of the Imitation of Christ.

With a light ouer mine heart, which
forthwith driueth out the clouds of
all wicked cogitations, whereby I do
enjoy the long desired cleerenes of
God his light.

Because no vncleane, nor filthie
thing can stand where hee abideth in
2, for hee loneth puritie, and is the 2 Re. 21
Ingrasser of the same; so that of ne- 27
cessitie all satanical illusion, together a Mat. 5, 8
with the pomps of this worlde, must
be packing.

Therefore my passions & tentations
which I did endure being suppres-
sed, I began both the more euident-
ly to knowe, and the more earnest-
ly to loue, and the more heartily to
praise him, for vouchsafing at the
length to beat back the damned crew
of the wicked from assailing me.

For they doe disturb my peace, &
finde so shut vp my mouth, that I
am ashamed to speake vnto my wel-
beloued.

But in vaine doe they bend them-
selues against his power and wise-
dome, for as soon as a moment he
can slide downe into mine heart, and
poure in secretly good motions, that
I may both contemne, and utterly
neglect

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neglect all their priuie whisperings;
O my faithfull; and all happy
freed; take mee so vnto thee, when
soeuer thou shalt perceiue mine af-
fections to bee either pressed downe
at any time with the weight of sinne,
or to be held with vnneccessarie busi-
nes, that I may not wander farre a-
stray from thee after the swarme of
wicked cogitations; and so ouerha-
stlie be deprived of thy grace, with-
out which I shall not be able to enioy
thy friendship.

For thou art my Lord, and my
God b, which by thy word dost both
b Mat 4.10
c pl. 66.9
heale, and sanctifie; which holdest
my soule in life e, and sufferest not
my feete to slip, but deliuerest mee
from the euill day, and from the
snarcs of death.

Oh, how many haue bin cast off, &
utterly perished, that haue bin much
more innocent than I am!

And therefore my soule, praise
thou the Lord, and all that is within
d Pla. 103.
mee, blesse his holy Name.

1.2.
My soule, I say, praise thou the
Lord; and forget not all his benefi-
ts: it is all too little, and far vnuffici-
ent, whatsoeuer thou shalt either
thinke, or speake, or promise to his
praise.

of the Imitation of Christ.

praise. For hee exceedeth all praise,
and is much sweeter than any mu-
sick.

Wherefore my soule cleaueth to
thee alone, and loueth thee aboue
all other gifts, notwithstanding it be
exceedingly beautifull and sweete
which of meere good will thou hast
sent vnto me.

For thou alone art the spouse: as e Mat. 9.15
for all things else they are gifts, and
arguments of loue.

In steede of thee I will not loue
them; neither will I beleene that a-
ny thing, or all things in the world
can suffice mee, if I haue not thee: for
in so dooing, I may perchance forgo
thee with them too.

Thou givest me leaue to vse many
things for thy sake; but I may not
enjoy so much as one thing in thy f Exod. 20
steed f. 3.

And therefore, O Christ my sweet
spouse, I haue preferred thee afore
all other things, and my care hath
bin aboue all things to loue thee.

Wherefore graunt that blessedly
I may enjoy thee, and in that vniou
everlastingly to triumph in happines
together with thee.

But how farre am I come? I haue

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enriched my speech more than perhaps you would. But pardon me, good friend. For I haue bin carried aloft through the loue of my especiall, and onely friend; and would to God it would please him still to lift vp both me and you too; in contemplation!

Let him provide an heavenly ascension, but let vs not keepe a base going downe.

M. Aske you me, whether I am forsaken at any time of my beloued?

S. Yes, I say so.

M. But how doe you behaue your self in trouble?

S. I take all things as patiently as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturallie I am grieved: but astonishing my spirit, I haue inward patience; that my griefe prooue not incurable. For I forget not, how he that loueth, liueth in paine.

I liue by faith; I beleene the holy Scriptures; I giue credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction: yet I doubt not, neither indeed ought I to doubt but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send me ease.

For true, and to bee credited are those

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those wordes which are declared.
Because the verie saints themselves
haue bene exercised in many, and
proued in like things.

Nature continually doth wish for
quietnes, and seeketh to be comfort-
ed in some thing: but the spirit now
withstanding is readie to sustaine
whatsoeuer the wil of God is I should
endure.

h Heb. 11

4. 5. 6. &c.

i Mar. 14.

If therefore I shall be lesse zealous, 38
and lesse willing to do good, my pu-
nishment shall be the more grieuous.
*Though he slay me, saith the wise man
h, yet will I trust in him.*

k Iob 13.

If I loue vertues, patience is a great 15.
vertue: therefore let patience euer-
more bee retained. For the more
praise we purchase, the more paines
we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our vertue may bee pro-
ued, and made the more glorious,
we are commonly exercised by con-
trarie euents.

Therefore whensoever any such
triall shal happen, be not out of heart,
neither fall downe; but retaine thou
patience, and extoll the righteous-
nes of God. The Lord is not so hard
and pitilesse, that he can suffer you
to abide long vncomforted.

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Onelie haue a care, that you nei-
ther lament immoderately, nor yet
murmure against the righteous and
Iust God, because you are forsaken,
least the wicked spirit doe send vnto
you more grieuous tentations of
your faith, whereby being ouer feare-
full, you shall extreemely bee as-
sisted.

Wherefore beare a little, and sup-
presse your sorrowe, although the
griefe both of your heart and bodie
be neuer so great.

Abide constant in that good pur-
pose, which at the first you intended
to keepe. For it is good, especially at
such an extremitie, to cast all confi-
dence vpon the beloued.

Looke thou patiently for God his
heavenly comfort, so shall you spee-
dily perceiue a speciall fauor, & sight
of God.

Lo, you haue a faithfull witnesse,
in psal. 40. 1 saying m., I waited patiently for the
Lord, and he inclined vnto mee, and
heard my crye.

And that in your neede you may
finde the like fauour, I doe wish you
both earnestly to pray your selfe,
and desire others to praie for you
also, and so commit your self wholly

of the Imitation of Christ.

to his will and ordinance, that hee may deal with you euen as it shall please him; and say to him with a good conscience:

In thine hands are my workes, thou knowest how it goeth with me; thou knowest what I suffer; and now, if it be thy will, I shall speedily be comforted.

Notwithstanding, let that be done which seemeth right, & good in thine eyes, and haue mercy on me, a desolate, and miserable wretch, pitiouſly complaining vnto thee.

If therefore thou continue in patience and long-suffering, and for a little trouble, swaue not from the faith and love in Iesus Christ, assure your selfe the brightnes of God his fauour will returne, and illuminate thee most gloriously with his beames of spirituall comfort. And so the beloued at his returne shall bee more deere vnto thee, than if he had neuer bin absent.

For the sentence of God his displeasure is not past calling back; neither is hee so offended, that hee may not be reconciled againe.

Doubtlesse hee will speedily, and easily bee at one with thee, if thou giue

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give diligence, & promise afterward both to be more careful that you sin not, and earnest to lead a vertuous life.

If thou wilt yeeld to these wholesome admonitions, doubt you not, thy beloued wil be with you as afore, and at his presence you will receiue much comfort, saying :

npL 31.19

How great is thy goodnes, which thou hast laid vp for them that feare thee! which thou hast don for them which trust in thee! vnder the shadow of thy wings thou wilt protect them.

O Zion, thou shalt be renued, & see thy King which is to raigne in thee.

oDan. 2.37 Thy beloued is the King of power, whose hinder parts are in the palenes of gold, but his head is pure gold.

Thus much may suffice to be said for your comfort.

As for other thinges concerning the change of the beloued, namely, how hee appeareth sometime, and sometime runneth to and fro, in the next discourse you shall receiue, and heare them euen from his owne mouth.

Chap.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 17.

1. The maiesty, & omnipotencie of
God. 2. How, and why the Lord afflic-
teth his children.



*M*ercelous are thy
works, & my soule
knoweth it right apsa. 139
well a. 14

How is it O my
beloued, that I
am thus dealt
withall? Why hast thou forsaken me?
Answer, I beseech thee.

Thou didst leaue me, & wentest, &
camest againe. And herein thou did-
dest well. For hadst thou not made a
speedy returne, I had fainted wel-nie:
but thou tookest compassion vpon
me, being priuy to all my secrets.

For through your departure I was
very sad: and now for your returne I
am glad againe.

Notwithstanding, for my learning
sake, tell, what good meaning had
you therein? What auaileth it you
so to leaue, and afflict me?

Take you pleasure in hearting? Tar. b Luk. 24
ry wish vs, for it is towards night b. 29

O come, & sit among vs, for lo, I
and

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& another disciple are verie desirous
to heare you speake, and we heartily
pray you to instruct vs.

Speake boldly what it shall please
you, & if you think good, turne your
speech vnto mee. I doe heare none
with such pleasure as I doe you. And
whosoener else dooth speake, his
speech is gratefull, & wel listened vnto
of me, for your sake that speake
within him.

And therefore your speech shall
bee to me more sweete, than cyther
the hony, or the hony-combe: For
they passe in sweetnesse all other
words.

Let now your voice sound in mine
eares.

So then the voice of the beloued
thundered, and said:

L. I am the Lord which speake right
cousailes: And who is like mee in
counsell and wisdom? *2 Esai. 45. 19*

Who made the sea, and the drie
land? I, the Lord, forming the light,
and creating the darknes. *2 Esai. 45. 7. 8.*

Who hath entred into the sea,
and brought forth waters out of the
deepe? Even I, the Lord, which
search the hearts and the reins: *psal. 7. 9*

Who hath knowen all things past,
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and is priuie to the things to come?
Euen I; the Lord, which haue done
all things in measure, number and
weight f.

f WiC. 11. 17

I am the creator both of heauen
and earth g; the ruler of this world g
b; the knower of hidden things h;
the reuealer of secrets k; the posses-
sor of the whole world l, and the be-
holder of the causes of all particu-
lars.

g Es. 43. 5

h Ti. 1. 17

i Re. 3. 15

k Eccl. 42. 20

l Mat. 10. 26

1 pla. 50. 12

I am God, and change not m, who
haue continually with me the causes
of all changes in the world.

m Mal. 3. 6

I am God the Almighty n, whose
power is inuincible o; I am God the
most high p, whose highnesse can
not bee attained q: I am God, the
most righteous r, whose beeing can
not be conceived f.

n Gen. 35. 11

o Reu. 4. 8

p Reu. 11. 17

q Rom. 9. 19

r Esa. 14. 14

f Psa. 139. 7

8. &c.

I am for my preience euery where
t, and yet no where to be seen u.

t Mat. 19. 17

u Job 11. 7. 8

I am the most spirituall, and far-
thest from the senses of man x.

8. &c.

t pl. 139. 7. 8

I beare all things, yet neuer bur-
dened y, and I fill and rule each place,
and yet vnstretched.

9.

u Job 23. 8. 9

x Iohn 1. 18

y Heb. I. 3

I Behold both things past, & things
to come alike, as though they were
present z.

z WiC. 8. 8

I surpass all creatures both spiri-
tuall

Eccl. 43. 10

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apf. 35. 10 tuall, and coporall.

I am diuerslie to be named: yet no thought is able to conceiue mee as I am.

I shewe my selfe suddenly, and forth-with when one would little thinke, I am gone againe.

b 1. Tim. 6
16. I am indeed the inuisible God, which after a thousand waies declare my presence to my friends.

And thus I spake vnto the louing soule:

I will hide my face for a little season, I will forsake her for a while, to see if her loue bee pure, and vnfained.

It is a great matter to loue vnfaignedly. For that is to loue mee neither for her owne sake, nor for any temporall commoditie, or spirituall comfort; but to loue mee, and mee
e Mat. 4. 10 only e, and that for mine owne sake, and that to the end, and that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

It is not in euerie one thus to loue mee; but this prerogative of pure louing, is proper onely to the perfect soule.

But she that is yet vnperfect, hath great need often to be prooued, and exercised, that shee may knowe both
how

of the Imitation of Christ.

how much she loueth mee, and how greatly she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your heart, Truly I doe loue (Christ) you, and often you repeate the same thing, I loue him indeed.

But I credit not words, or thoughts onely. For I will make due tryall of that loue.

When I am present, and speake faire; when I either put, or encrease good motions in the minde; when I grant prosperitie most commonly or pleasure, then can you say withall deuournes, *O my beloued, I do loue you.* And you say well. For I am greatlie to be loued, and you are at no time either to thinke, or speake otherwise than friendly, and honourably of mee.

But for prosperitie, & good turnes only to loue, & to commend me, what great thing is it? Because euery sinner doe the same. For when they haue received what naughtily they craved, they oftentimes blesse mee for the same. But praise is not seemely in the mouth of the sinner. d Eccclus.

He therefore which either for some profit, or comfort receiued, dooth loue mee, dooth no more than a co-
uctous

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uerous man doth. But exceede him,
I say, exceede him, & proceede vnto
greater righteousness.

Be ashamed still to bee weake and
tender; learne to eate mans meate,
bee not still fed with the milke of
children.

Attaine thou to the company of
the stoute Davids, that can hold both
speare, and sword, and shield.

Luk. 9. 23 Take vp the crosse, and follow
me. e.

Make hast to bee in the number
of them, which haue learned to beate
diuers afflictions, and much banish-
ment for my name sake. You are too
much giuen vnto ease.

I purpose to trie you, and to turne
vnto the other side, that you may
knowe what you can suffer, least you
seeme ouer-innocent and holie in
your owne conceipt.

Tribulation and anger, and mine
heauie displeasure, together with
sore tentations of wicked spirits, shall
come vpon you. Some vnjustly shall
spoyle you of your goodes: others
shall take no compassion vpon you;
others shall defame; others shall re-
sist; others shall overcharge; o-
thers shall carrie you perforce whi-
cher

of the Imitation of Christ.

either you would not goe; some outwardly, others inwardly, shall trouble you. Some shall be advanced vnto high degree, and honour, but you shall be left vnto reproches, and endure seruile paines. In all these, yea and in greater things you shall be proued, whether you are a valiant soldier of mine, or no.

I will depart and not giue ouer, vntill I haue made sufficient triall, whether you blesse me to my face.

Now if I finde, that from the hart vnfainedlie you doe loue mee, and continually doe praise my name, then is it meete that from thenceforth I call you Spouse, and that you shall haue a secret chamber with mee.

But if I perceiue that you cannot beare my correction, but will iudge my punishment to be ouer-sharp, and still bewaile mine absence, wishing for mee with heartie and earnest desire, I will sende you my staffe, that you may arise thereby, and afterward my selfe will come, and restore you againe vnto my wonted fauour. For it is not my will that you should utterly faint; because him that lo-
ueth me, I will loue to the ende *f.*

f. Ioh. 13. 1

And

The fourth booke.

And although your loue be not so perfect as could be wished; yet I will not despise you, but provide that you may grow on in louing. For my care is that you doe well; and therefore mistrust me not.

I know what you can endure; which maketh me to temper my courses that you bee not tempted about your strength, and so faint.

And if I stay, in your opinion, some-what too long, looke for me yntill the day of my visitation. For coming, I will come, and perform my promise.

Be you still in prayer, still meditating vpon the holy scripture, and alway be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignorant but your grief will bee much: but so quickly to be overthrowen, and to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

Where is your faith? A great faith you had neede of, especially on this behalfe: for although you see not mee, yet are you scene of mee; in whose hands you are to committ both your selfe, and all that you haue.

For although you are not prai-
10

g Eccles.
23.29

of the Imitation of Christ.

to my iudgements : yet having a
strong faith, you must of necessity

say b, *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and* *h psal. 119*
just are thy iudgements. 137

So then be of good comfort, for
this affliction is not to your destruc-
tion, but for the glory of God.

I denyed your petition, because I
would haue due prooffe of your faith
and loue.

For, all this I did that you should
well vnderstand both your own weak-
nes, and my goodnes.

I know what you are k, better *psal. 119*
than your self doth. Yea, I haue kno- *67.71*
wen you thoroughly, not of late, but *k psal. 7.9*
from everlasting t. *1 Wis. 8.8*

Wherefore acknowledge the bene-
fit which you haue by mee; behold
how miserable you should be, if once
I forsake you.

As yet you haue not profited suf-
ficiently in the knowledge of your
selfe. And because it is very expedi-
ent that you haue that knowledge,
my will was that by experience you
should attaine therunto.

It is very good for you to be for-
saken, to be troubled, to be humbled
sometime, that so the better you
may euen sensibly perceiue your
owne

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m Ps. 119. owne weaknes m.

71.

I knowe right well this will make you a good disciple of mine. And what, I pray you, haue you lost, if heretby you prooue more wise and watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant, and forgetfull of your selfe, thinking that goodnes to be within you which is not; selfe-loue doth deceiue you, and while you thinke not of the giuer, you doe abuse the gift. I made you drunke; but you forgot how the grape did growe vppon mine owne vine.

Trye your selfe a little, acknowledge your strength. If that which you had came of your selfe, why did you not hold it? But if you could not hold it, confesse that you receiued it from aboue. And therefore ascribe all the honor to the mercy of God, and openly confesse how without mee you can doe nothing.

n 1. Cor. 4.

7.

Iam. 1. 17

o. Ioh. 15. 5

Consider both in what Steele I stand you, and how able also I am to confirme you in all goodnesse.

Where were you before I called you, but weltering in sin and wickednesse? And now how would you wonder, if I directed you not? Yes, and

when

of the Imitation of Christ.

when also went it well with you, if
you had not my fauor?

S. And I said, At no time, sweete
Lord. Thou alone, art my singular
good friend; in all things, and aboue
all most faithfull.

L. Why then did you purpose so wic-
kedly with your selfe, to goe after
strange louers?

What misliked you in me; was it
either my maiestie, or my beautie?

S. Ah Lord, there is none compara-
ble to thee, either for beautie, or for
glorie, or for riches, or for authority;
neither in heauen nor in earth is any
like vnto thee *p.* For thou onely art *P 1. Kin. 8*
most hie ouer all creatures. *23.*

The heauens are thine *q,* the earth *q psal. 89*
also is thine; thou hast laide the *11.*
foundation of the world, and all that
therein is.

Much is it that thou hast imparted
vpon thy creatures, by which, thy
beauty, wisdom, and goodnes doth
appeare: but yet in comparison of *r Ro. 1. 20*
thy blessed, and glorious presence,
it is nothing. So that by experience
I haue learned now, that I cannot
lacke thy company one houre to-
gether, but with much griefe to my
soule.

Returne

The fourth booke

L. Returne therefore vnto me; thou hast hitherto wandered enough about.

Let not hence-forth to bee more staied, and milde, and faithfull, yet and to trust in mee, not onely in the day of my gracious visitation, but much more in the night of temptation.

I haue let you slip, that being wearied, you might returne vnto me the more speedily, and being frustrate of outward comfort, at length vnderstand how much you are bound vnto mee, that so often haue called vnto you.

And therefore listen now at the last, for it is not without cause that sometime you are forsaken; that you are colde sometime in zeale; that it irketh you; that you are overwearied with temptations; that on all sides you are afflicted; that you can neither finde any consoale, nor feele comfort, but are enforced to endure anguish and miserie at all times, and in all places.

I am absent, to the ende you may know how needfull it is that I be present with you, not onely in one matter, or in a speciall cause, but in euery

of the Imitation of Christ.

merie action in all places and times
so well earlie as late, wherefoener
you shall become, goe, or stand.

For this will teach you to walke
warily with your friend; to abstaine
from vanities, and to take heede of
offenses f.

[Mich. 6.8

I doe leave you, that you may
well vnderstand how much you are
bound to loue mee, that is, that you
may see a manner how to loue mee
in deed.

It is verie true, you thought your
selfe more stout, and happie, than in
truth you were: but when I did once
withdrawe mine aide from you a lit-
tle, it then appeared to the world how
you were verie poore, and mise-
rable s.

[Ecc. 3.17

How shall your loue bee knowne,
vlesse you beare my yoake with pa-
tience?

Sometime I see you to waxe slug-
gish, and therefore I doe hide my
selfe for an houre, like a friend stan-
ding behinde the wall s, that you
may be stirrd vp the more zealously
to seeke mee.

[Song. 2.9

I knowe for my part, and see all
things x: but troublous trials (which x Eccl. 43
is good for many causes) doe make 19.20.

H I

you

Whom God toucheth, he fauoureth. 146 Chap. 17

The fourth Booke

you the more heedie and wise in all
y *Isai. 28. 19* your actions y.

Moreover if you loue mee, you
will not waxe the more sluggish in
seeking mee for all this; if you like
me, you will seeke me.

What? Wot you not, how riches
painelessly come by, are kept most
carefully? who so wisheth rest, as
the wearied man? Who loueth so
kindely, as hee which hath sighed
most heauily? And is not that reuel
which was lost, and is found againe,
much more esteemed then before it
was? So, euen so is the ioye double,
and the mirth doubled, at the long
wished presence of the beloued.

2 Lu. 14. 19 And therefore it is much for your
profit that I withdrawe my selfe; be-
cause I doe it, not for any ill will to
you-wardes, but vpon verie good
cause; so do I dally with my friends.
Let it suffice you at this time, that
you haue bin in my fauor to heare so
much at my mouth.

Besides, when you haue neede,
returne vnto mee, and feare not.
For I neuer shut mine eares against
that person which humbly and ex-
Mar. 7. 7. 8 hesteth crieth for mine assistance.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 18.

1. The confidence of a true

Christian. 2. God iustifieth the vngodlye.

3. giueth whatsoeuer good is to man.

4. will haue no man to despaire.

5. but that all sinners shold
flie vnto his mercie.

Y Lord God will helpe
me, therefore shall I not
be confounded.

a Isai. 50. 7

S. Let it grieue no
bodie, though I loue
much to speake with
my Lord God, whose goodnes hath
allured, & inflamed me both to pray
and to meditate in such sort, that me
thinks I should be too hard and un-
kinde, if I made none answer vnto
his words.

But happely some one will say
against mee, Therefore neither doe
you feare God, seeing you are a soule
sinner, vnworthy euen to lue in this
world.

Whence is it, that you dare so pre-
sume in your heart? And, beeing the
least, and vilest of all others, with

H 2

what

The fourth booke

what face can you thrust forth your
selfe so to talke with your Lorde
2 Eccles. 15 God? Whom doe you make your
9. selfe?

John 9. 13 Oh, my louing Lord, doe thou
answere on my behalfe. For the
mouth of the wicked is opened vpon
b ps. 109. 2 me.

c Job 9. 20 If I would iustifie my selfe, mine
owne mouth shall condemne mee.
And though I were cleane, yet did
not my soule know so much.

Oh Lord, thou knowest my follie,
and my shamefastnesse. Speake thou
on my behalfe, and I full gladly will
keepe silence.

L. Giue thou none heede to the
wordes of the wicked: but rather do
thou remember how I haue saide,
I came not to call the righteous but the

d Mar. 2. 17 *sinners to repentance.*

e Mat. 28. 17 Am not I to doe what I will?
Mar. 17. 2 Who may resist my pleasure?

Heb. 2. 8 If I thinke it good to shewe fauor
to thee-ward, though little thou de-
serue the same at mine hands, who
shall reprocue me therefore?

f Rom. 8.

33. 34. He that is without sinne, let him
g Iohn 8, 7 throwe the first stone at thee. But
if they, all the packe of them, are si-
ners, with what face can they find
fault

of the Imitation of Christ,

fault with my fauor to thee-ward?

You haue not chosen mee *h*, but *h* Ioh. 15. 16
my mercy did preuent you.

Dareth any yet murmur against
you for coming vnto me? Comfort
thy selfe, his murmur is not against
thee, but flatlie against my person,
because it is I that receiue, and eate
with sinners &c.

11. Ti. 1. 15

k Mat. 9. 13

12. 13.

And why ought you not to chal-
lenge mine acquaintance, the which I
reioyce to offer rather than to with-
draw from any one?

S. Oh grations Lord, lay not this
sin to their charge, but to me, and to
my sinnes.

I cannot denie, but deseruedlie
they conserue ill of mee; yea I doe
openly acknowledge this withall, that
I am much more wicked then any
man doth knowe.

L. You do well thus to humble your
selfe. For in so doing, you shall euer
gaine, and more easily obtaine my
fauour.

Notwithstanding, I will not there-
fore cast you away, because you are
a sinner and faulty, albeit that should
make you both to thinke basely of
your selfe, and alway to haue in mind
what great sinnes you are polluted

The fourth booke
withall.

But that you perish not through
Desperation, consider how manie
righteous men I haue made of sin-
ners; friends of enemies, choo-
sing the humble, and refusing the
proude.

I haue no neede of any gift of
thine: onely this I require at your
handes, namely, that you loue mee
with a pure heart, and I am satisfi-
ed.

S. I am cleane dashed: for, alas, there
is nought within mee to stir vp your
loue thus to me-ward.

L. I doe neither respect nor require
the things that this world doth offer
to get fauour withall; if you do loue,
and that your loue bee seruent, and
constant, it is all that I aske.

But, I pray thee, whose are the
things that do, or may adorne a man?
Are not all things mine, whatsoever
doe glitter either in the bodie, or
minde?

As for that of the world, and which
set out the body, they ought little to
trouble your minde. But the things
which belong to the beautifying of
vertue, it standeth you vpon to seeke,
that you may please the Lord in the
light.

Chap. 18 151 Him that loueth, God fauoureth.
of the Imitation of Christ.

light of the liuing.

Howbeit, you haue well done in humbling, and accusing your selfe so well outwardly as inwardly before the face of my maiesty, by confessing vnfaignedly your great weaknes, and wickednesse, and by fetching deepe sighes, for that you are verie vnworthy to challenge the fauour of my familiaritie euen but one hour, being as I am a glasse pure without spot 9, & you are a great sinner & vncleane, q Wis. 7.20
euen from your infancie. r Gen. 8.21

And therefore bee ever mindfull both of your fraile condition, and of my glorious Maiestie, and so with humble reuerence approch boldly into my presence.

For I am hee that putteth awaie thine iniquities, and will not remember thy sins; it is I that iustifie the vngodly; and this I doe for mine holy name sake; yea and I am still readie to minister greater giftes of mercie vnto thee. [Isai. 43.25]
r Rom. 4.5

Because I doe ever choose to shew fauour rather then displeasure, as one who had rather spare than punish.

Yea, all this seemeth but little in mine eyes, nor am I so content with the first grace that I will not adde

The fourth Booke

a second or a third rather, yea, in
 verie deede, as I can set none ende
 to my mercies : so neither can the
 number of my gifts and benefits bee
 recited x.

upl. 145.9

xpl. 68.19

Last of all, after that I for my part
 haue pardoned finnes, and men for
 their partes by their goodnesse haue
 testified to the world their vnfaigned
 repentance, then doe I restore for
 the most part the comfort of mine
 healthfull countenance, by pouring
 in most plentifull maner the grace of
 mine holy spirit.

And although a sinner doe abide
 still in the flesh : yet doe I receiue
 him into my familiarity, so that he is
 not to feare the vtter confusion for
 sins committed: but rather to thanke
 and praise God, that old things bee
 passed away, and that all things are
 become newe y.

ya. Cor. 5
 17.

So gracious, and mercifull am I,
 that alwayes I am more readie to for-
 giue, than thou art to beg forgiveness
 at mine handes; more readie to giue,
 than thou art to aske.

Therefore why feare you? What
 dismaileth you to approch vnto the
 side of such fauors? And why do you
 estrange your selfe from so great
 kindnes

of the Imitation of Christ.

kindenes offered vnto you so frank-
lie of mine own accord ?

Doubtleffe though you did cer-
tainly vnderstand that I were pur-
posed to giue you the denyall : yet
ought you not to desist from praier,
nor yet to be out of al hope of being
heard ; but so much the more ear-
nestly to be instant in crying, vntill
you were heard.

For my mercies are infinite, and
what I deny at one time, may bee
graunted fauourable at another.

How know you whether I will
turne my face vnto you, and grant
you the desire of your heart ?

And what saith the Prophet con-
cerning mee ? Approche vnto him,
and be illightened, so shall not your
faces be confounded.

Wherefore accuse your slow com-
ming vnto me, rather then your of-
ten approching ; and rather your
fearefull shamesfastnesse, than your
prompt presuming of forgiveness.

To hope well of my goodnes, is a
verie token of true humilitie, and of
a great faith.

This doe I speake, that you may
not offend ; and that when you doe
offend, you despaire not, but rise

H 5 againe

The fourth Booke

again with speede. For yet you haue

x 1. Ioh. 2. 1 hope, and an advocate with the Father?

What? Look you to be all wor-
thie before you make access vnto
mee? And of your self when will you
hee so?

If only such as are good and wor-
thie, and great, and perfect, should
approch vnto mee, to whom should
sinners and publicans approach?

So then what saith the Gospell?
There resorted vnto him publicans, and
sinners to heare him.

a Luk. 15. 1 Therefore let the vnworthy ap-
proch, that they may become wor-
thie; let the wicked approach, that
they may be made good; let the
weake and vnperfect approach, that
they may proue strong and perfect;
yea let all and euerie one approach,
that they may receiue from the a-
bundant streames of the well of life.

b Ioh. 4. 14 I am the well of life, that cannot bee
drawne drie.

c Ioh. 7. 37 He which is athirst, let him come
vnto me and drinke. And he which
hath nothing, let him come and buy
d Isai. 55. 1 without siluer and without monie.

He that is sicke, let him come to be
e Mar 9. 12 healed. Hee that is neither hot nor
cold,

of the Imitation of Christ,

could let him come to be inflamed *f. Mar. 9. 24*

He that is fearefull, let him come to be encouraged: he that is sorrowfull, let him come to be comforted.

He that is withered, let him come to bee fatted; he that is wearied with cares, let him come to bee refreshed with joy.

Lo my delight is to bee with the children of men *g.*

g. Ro. 8. 31

Hee that desireth wisdom, let him come vnto my lessons *h.*

h. Psal. 119

Hee that seeketh riches, let him come to receiue those which are eternall, and incorruptible *i.*

9. 24

i. Mat. 6. 19

Hee that hunteth for honour, let him come to get an euerlasting name in the inheritance of heaven; hee that wisbeth for felicitie, let him come, and hee shall taste the soueraigne, eternall and infinite happiness *k.*

20.

k. 1. Cor. 2

I, euen I it is which giueth all temporall good things, yea and besides that, I giue eternall riches in the heauens *m.* And what I promise I will performe, at such time as my commandements are duly obserued. And he then shall bee crowned gloriously in heauen, that hath foughten couragiously in this world.

9.

l. James 17

m. Ro. 6. 23

n. 2. Tim. 1

11. 12.

Ch p.

The fourth Booke

CHAP. 19.

1. The desire of a Christian Soule is
never satisfied, till God bee enjoyed.

2. No comfort any whit com-
 parable to the spirituall
 ioye.

ap. 19, 14



*As the meditation of
 mine heart be accepta-
 ble in thy sight.*

What can be more
 comfortable, What
 more ioyfull to the faithfull Soule,
 than still deuoutly to meditate vpon
 her Lord God; that whom shee can-
 not as yet beholde in a cleere, and
 blessed sight, at the least she may, as
 it were, make him present by earnest
 calling him into minde?

Therefore let her beholde him as
 in a glasse darkely, whom shee is

1. Cor. 13 not to see face vnto face.

12.

And albeit she may not haue a full
 sight of him in his maiestie; yet let
 her search for him by types in the
 Scriptures.

Oh that the care to seeke the
 face of the Lord did neuer waxe cold
 within me, but daily more and more
 encreased!

Howbeit,

of the Imitation of Christ.

Howbeit, the soule that loueth God, hath a wonderfull desire to enioy the sight of God. For to see him is happinesse indeede, and the absolute felicitie.

c Reu. 22. 4.

Wherefore shee desireth this blessednesse, that, her whole appetite hauing attained her ende, she may be satisfied, and at quiet: for nothing in the world is able to content her.

d Eccle. 1. 8.

For long experience hath taught her, that the more shee straieth from celestiall happines, the more vnhappy and vnquiet she is, inasmuch as in this world nothing is permanent, or durable, that may assuage the heat of her affection.

e 1. Cor. 7.

31.

So then let her make returne vnto him that made her, and let her desire to be blessed of him, who at the first created her.

f 1. Ioh. 2. 15.

16. 17.

g Gen. 1. 26.

27.

For doubtlesse, he that made the soule, must satisfie the soule with good things. Because, such a desire hath hee instilled into her, that hee beeing gon, nothing will content her; nor any ioy comfort her greatly.

h Wisd. 3. 23.

i gpl. 103. 9.

And therefore soule of mine, stand not heere still, for this is no place of rest for thee: but mount aloft, ascende

The fourth booke

cende vnto him that made thee. For
He hath now sent his messengers, &
biddeth thee to ascend.

So many desires of eternall life as
he inspireth, so many messengers, he
doth sende. Which beeing entertain-
ed, prepare thy selfe to thy iourne.

Then goest thou on, when thou
desirest to see him; when thou labo-
rest to please him; when thou re-
nouncest this world; when thou
doost, whatsoever thou doost, euen
of pure loue to him-ward.

For had hee not first sought thee,
and poured holy cogitations into
thy brest, thou couldest neuer seeke
him h.

B Ioh. 6. 44

For that soule dooth languish, not
for loue, but through wearines, which
is not enlightened with the beames
of the eternall sunne.

Iohn 1. 9

But, if through the sweete blastes
of the Southren winde, her frozen
coldnes, and sorrowe be once resol-
ued, then by reason of the light in-
spired; and incomprehensible diu-
inity, she beginneth to sweate, through
the hotnes of loue.

Oh infinite heate of the true
Sonne, what boilings doost thou
cause then within the heart of the
louer!

of the Imitation of Christ.

But? Thou dissoluest the darknes
of a sorrowfull minde, and bringest
the laborious toyle vnto nothing;
The long time and daies of pouertie
thou doost comfort and that abun-
dantly, with one simple beame of
thy glorious light.

O salue of the sorrowfull R! O shi-
ning light of such as wander and
seeke! k Mat. 9. 12.

Shine thou continually vpon me;
prepare thou a mansion place within
mee, euen till thine euermlasting light
doth appeare.

Oh how sweete, and how comfor-
table will thy presence bee! seeing
euen of a little remembrance, so vn-
speakeable ioy doth arise.

How gladly can I turne vnto thee;
how frankly doe I renounce euen
this world, that I may be comforted
with thy heauenly fauour!

For it will bee none hard matter
for the soule which longeth for the
sight of thy countenance, to bereaue
her selfe of all outward pleasure,
when shee shall either feele now a
greater in the minde, or very short-
ly expect with a perfect faith for the
same.

Furthermore, none is to bee so foo-
lish.

The fourth booke

lish as to thinke, that thou wilt haue the deuout soule any long while vncomforted; or that the gifts of thy fauour which she is to receiue for all her conquests ouer nature, shall bee small: for no earthly comfort, whatsoever it bee or whence soeuer it arise, is any whit comparable either in the qualitie or quantitie of sweetness to the heavenly ioy.

And therefore labor thou, O faithfull soule, to shew thy selfe such toward thine heavenly spouse Christ, that hee may continually bee gracious and fauourable vnto thee; for through him and in him you shall in most abundant manner finde that, which exceedingly shall minister comfort vnto you in all extremities.

The oftner you haue access vnto him, and the nigher you doe approche vnto his side, the sweeter hee will appeare, and the more amiable in your eyes.

But if you withdrawe your selfe, then the losse will be your owne; and he abiding in his beautie, shall feelee neither griefe nor trouble.

You stand in need of his, but he of no mans goodnes.

So that you may become blessed through

of the Imitation of Christ.

through him, but so cannot wee by
your proceeding.

Hec alone suffereth himselfe; hee
alone can neyther bee augmented,
nor diminished.

Through his goodnesse all things
are, whatsoeuer bee, whether they
haue life, sense, or vnderstanding.

1 A&. 17. 28

And therefore iust it is that all
creatures euerlastingly should blesse
him.

mp. 150. 6

Oh how gladly would I discourse
and speake of him vnto thee, if I
were able sufficiently so to doe!

But what? He neither is, nor may
be vttered. Againe, as he cannot be
vttered by meanes, so can hee not be
conceiued in minde.

Which being so, thinke not with-
standing of thy Creator so well as
man may, taking the remembrance
of his abundant sweetnes for a com-
fort, vntill such time as hee re-
uealeth the sight of his

owne countenance

vnto thee in the

heavens.

n Rev. 22. 4

Chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 20.

1. A complaint of the Soule for the want of her blessed state. 2. What weeping pleaseth God. 3. Who truly blessed. 4. A description of God.

a Pl. 31. 22



Said in mine heart I am cast out of thy sight a.

Mine heart is wounded within me, through the long differing of thy glory.

I will speake therefore, and reason with my grieved Soule. The great zeale of loue compelleth mee to speake, and suffereth nothing to be concealed from thee.

What then shall I say? Lo my God, in peace is my most bitter bitterness.

He that is ignorant, wotteth not the meaning heereof. But it is not so with mee. I know, and I vnderstand it, and therefore I am not ashamed to sing with the Prophet.

b Pl. 38. 15 I speake to thee my Lord b, who
c Reu. 3. 15 knowest all things; and giuest both
Eccles. 4. knowledge and vnderstanding according to thy good pleasure, that
20. neither

of the Imitation of Christ.

neither I may glorie more than is meete I should, nor the foole advance mee, when in truth I am simple.

I may confesse then what I haue receiued from thee. And yet what neede haue I to tell you thereof, when as you are neither ignorant, nor can take any pleasure of the same.

Againe, what comfort can come vnto you, which are the comfort of the comfortlesse?

So that the profit is mine, which doe lacke the consolation of words, thereby to stir vp mine affection to thee-ward, and to finde some ease for my desolate soule.

For, seeing I may not beholde thy presence; I will bewaile thine absence; because euen this is a token of loue, and a great pleasure to the louing soule.

Now then the sense of this sentence appeareth. Because it is rightly saide of the louing soule, how she moe seruently she loneth, and the more earnestly she loneth after eternall things, the more truly she feeleth the power thereof working within her.

They

The fourth booke

They are not cold words, but to the vnkinde soule; neither deafe organs, but to the hardened heart.

The louing and zealous soule knoweth this well; and is so often enflamed in heart, as she is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore shee speaketh to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whom shee would not be knowne.

And although sometime shee talketh with men: yet that which they heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoeuer shee saith to thee, it is to the verie soule, and rather by sighing of the hart, than by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bittier bitterness. As if shee said; After that of thy goodnes I returned vnto the peace of minde, the transitorie state of the world began to bee still more greivous vnto mee. For I see in this peace, how farre I am separated from the soueraigne peace.

And indeede beeing first busied with earthly desires, and mooued with diuerse passions, I was greatly hindered from spirituall cogitations, and so from heavenly contemplation, after which I should haue much longed: but that could I least
of

of the Imitation of Christ.

of all doe, because through sloth-
fulness I did forgo all sense of inward
sorrow.

But now seeing the troubles of idle
thoughts are taken away, I do some-
what rest in the peace of conscience,
and am drawne vnto heavenly mat-
ters with mine whole heart, and I doe
more lament, that I do not enioy the
good things of God, than erst I did
mourne being vexed with the trou-
bles of this world.

So that it is bitterness to my soule
euen to liue in this world, and to
goe vnder the heauie burden of sin.
But it is bitterest of all, when so much
as I may, all mine affections beeing
gathered together, I doe enioy now
the good things of the heart, & bend
my selfe, euen with hearty zeale to-
ward the armes of eternall peace,
and yet may not obtaine thereunto,
because of the bondes of my mortall
state.

And this makes mee euen with
griefe of heart to crie vnto thee, and
to saie :

*O wretched man that I am, who shall
deliuer me frō the body of this death?*

There is none so grievous a burden
vnto me, as stil to wander frō thee by
liuing

4 Ro. 7. 24

The fourth booke

living in the world ; for labouring in
loue, I wish for no comfort beside
thee.

For by good experience I haue
long sithence learned, that my soule
can neither bee satisfied with the
good things of this world e, nor yet
be blessed, vntill she be ioyned vnto
thee in the celestiall habitation.

e Ecclus. 1
8.

For as exceedingly she doth loue,
burne, and vse contemplation while
she is in the bodie : so will her desire
bee insatiable vntill the bodie bee
laid off.

And therefore her ende must bee
made perfect by attaining the soue-
raigne felicitie, and the light of thy
countenance f.

f Reu. 22. 4

g 1. Tim. 6
16.

Reuel. I. 5

Reu. 17. 14

h Ps. 16. 11

O King of heauen g, so amiable
in all respects ; O my all lonely be-
loued, even wholly to be desired,
when wilt thou fill me with the light
of thy countenance h ; when wilt
thou satisfie my longing with the wel
of life ?

i Psal. 42. 2

My soule hath much thirsted after
thee i ; and greatly will bee troubled
vntill she attaine thee.

Living in the world, and not see-
ing thee, I can take no comfort of
whatsoever I beholde ; so greatlie
doth

of the Imitation of Christ.

doth zeale waxe hot, that not once,
but often I breake into these words;

When shall I come, and appeare
before the face of my God?

k Pla. 42. 2

And this soue of mine cealeth nor,
but encreaseeth more and more, in
such sort, that I am driven euen to
weepe night and day, while conti-
nually I doe thinke with my selfe,
where is now my God?

For it is a comfort for the louing
soule to weepe for thy sake, while she
must want her desire; and still expect
thy comming.

And these teares doe more feede
and refresh the louing soule, than if
shee enjoyed all the things of this
world. For did she loue them, shee
would not weepe for thee. l Mat. 24. 6

Oh how blessed, & p'casing to thee
is the sheading of such teares!

For they doe both kill the desires
of secular and temporall ioyes; and
also they obtaine the celestiaall con-
solation.

And therefore none doe shed such
holly teares, but they which are both
singularly in loue, and verie notably
religious.

Far of another kinde be the teares
of such as miserablie bee troubled in
this

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this world.

For one man weepeth because hee is sicke; another for that hee is oppressed; another because hee is injured; another because his minde is contraried: but it is thou, religious soule only, which pourest forth tears euen of pure loue to thy Saniour: as for temporall damage, and worldly causes, they trouble thee not, for thou submittest thy selfe to the righteous iudgement of God, and art thankfull.

m Psa. 119

137.

And for so doing, let no worldly creature iudge thee either foolish, or impatient: because thy teares do not Greene but comfort; they doe not blur the face, but wash it; they hurt not the eies, but they purifie the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceiue heereof as they will, I cannot not thinke otherwise than well of you; for I doe wish to drinke deep of such teares.

S. If you wish to weepe with mee, then may you bee comforted with mee.

Oh that your soule were as I am! your could neuer forget what I doe feele.

of the Imitation of Christ.

I knowe whome I credit ; and sure
I am it is a more easie thing to deny
that there is any heauen and earth,
than that there is a God.

And I knowe also hee is my full
happinesse; and that I shall neuer bee
blesst vtill I haue an absolute sight
of his maiestie.

n Reu. 22

Whose sight because it is not yet 4.
graunted me, nor alwaies assured me,
doth make me to lament, inasmuch as
I am deprived of happines, wrapped
in the darknes of this life, and down-
peised with the waight of mine owne
infirmity, that I am not of power to
suffer that wonderfull light, and that
whatsoeuer I do think concerning the
glory of heauen, is so little, and over-
shadowed as it were with a cloude.

• Wis. 9. 13

Hence it is that I double my com-
plaint in steed of a song ; and while
they still say vnto mee, *Where is thy
God* ; my spirit is the more troubled. p Pl. 42. 10

For thus I thinke then, *where is my
felicities? where is the full ioy of mine
heart? where is my true peace and rest?*

Where be all the good things that
are vnspcakable, but onely in my
God? And when shall I enioy them,
vnlesse I be ioyned vnto him, hauing
nothing betweene?

The fourth booke

Yea, when shall I there bee? I knowe not, but I beleue well; I doe hope well, but yet I haue not.

Why then, where is my God, whom I loue so, and yet I see him not? through whose loue I am so often wounded; through whose absence I am so greened; through whose gracious visitation so refreshed sometime?

Where is my God, whom euen once to see, is to know all things?

Where is my God, in whom both mine heart, and my flesh doe so earnestly desire to reioyce?

Where is my God, for whose loue I suffer such paine and sorrow? His verie remembrance is sweete, but his presence is more louely, and expelleth all sadness from mine heart.

Where is mine hope, and my crowne? Is it not in thee my God,
 9-1.cor. 13 and in thy blessed countenance?
 12.

Oh, shewe mee once thy glory, and thy face: so will I cease to complaine.

If I contend a little with thee, O blame mee not; extreme zeale of good will hath many wonderfull deuises.

I am driven to expect, and moved
 still

of the Imitation of Christ.

still so long; and so this ioyfull combat doth continue.

CHAP. 21.

1. The delaying of the happie is patiently to be borne. 2. The felicitie of the life to come. 3. with a prayer for the

Lord, I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

a Psa. 26. 8

How gladly I would be with thee, thou knowest full well O my God; and how entirely I desire the same, I am not able sufficiently to expresse.

I wish it not onely when I am euill at ease; but also what prosperitie soeuer I enioy, my desire is to bee with thee.

But how shall my longing bee satisfied?

Here it griueneth me to continue b Phi. 1. 3, and yet of necessitie I must, but my desire is to bee with thee, and I may not yet.

And therefore I see no remedie,

The fourth Booke

but that I am with patience to endure this delay, and to refer my wishing to thine holy will.

For what? Is it meet I should murmur, when it must be so? God forbid.

Againe, I haue the examples of many of Gods children which haue vsed long patience in this life, and yet their hearts were in heauen.

b Heb. 11

13. 14. &c.

e col. 3. 1. 3

Therefore if thy will be to prolong my pilgrimage, I am willing to abide and obey your pleasure.

Howbeit, that with lesse grief I may beare my longing to be with thee, I will till that time still meditate with my selfe of that celestially habitation.

d 1. Cor. 2
9.

Yet I presume not to pearce into the least of those ioyes, which thou hast prepared for such as loue thee: but of this and that will I meditate, to the end that my affection being pressed downe and infected oftentimes, it may be stirred vp, and lifted into the hope of eternall blisse.

O that that day had once shined, whither then had the ioyes of heauen raished me!

How merrie at the heart should I bee then, and how happie should I thinke my selfe!

How happie should I then bee, enjoy.

enjoying a continuall peace. Reu. 21.4

From thenceforth should I make
none enquire for any thing, seeing
no secret could be hid.

But my life is spent in darknesse,
and therefore no marvel though my
sight doe dazle betwene the clouds
of glorie.

Notwithstanding I will lift vp mine
eyes, and though a farre off, behold
and salute that holy citie Ierusalem
builded in the heauen euen of liuely
stones, namely of holy angels and
men, replenished continually with
praise and mirth, and magnifying the
Lord their God for euer and euer. f Reu. 21.
10. 11. &c.

Now therefore my soule, take vnto
thee the wings of desire, and fly vp-
ward, flie I say from all bodilie sen-
ses: ascende from the visible forme of
this world, vnto the holie house of
God, euen vnto the newe Ierusalem,
builded substantially in aie lasting
peace, crowned with glorie and ho-
nor, and blessed with the abundance
of all good things.

Lo. Wonderfull and vnspeakeable
are the things (of heauen) which no
man eyther can see nor may vnder-
stand.

No sense is able to conceiue, nei-
ther can the vnderstanding of man
attaine

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attaine to knowe, how God is in his
saintes glorious, and wonderfull in
myselfe.

Mount thou in cogitation euen vnto
the highest things, stretch thy de-
fire into the everlasting eternitie, and
say with the Prophet *h*, *Glorious things*
are spoken of thee, O citie of God.

There whatsoever can be wished of
man, is had; and what is once got,
is kept without care.

God there is beheld face to face
clearly, truly, continually, and e-
ternally.

There the blessed and all glorious
Trinitie, in one vnseparable vnitie,
which of all the blessed citizens of

heaven is worshipped, praised, and
magnified, is perfectly knowne.

There is mine onely and right sin-
gularlie beloued friend, which is

more precious (to mee) than all ri-
ches; and the treasure aboue all to
be desired, even my Lord Iesus

Christ, the immortall spouse of the
Church, in whom are hid (but

yet revealed to the Saints) from the
beginning of the world, the whole

treasures of wisdom and know-
ledges.

to go to the other side of the world
to see him.

of the Imitation of Christ.

O how iocond are the saints now
before the face of the most holy, who
is the cause and spring of their blef-
sednes!

For there hee speaketh vnto them
not in parables, but plainly of the
Fathers.

1 Ioh. 16.

Hee is their Booke, euen the word 25.

which in the beginning was with
God, teaching all things and per- 1 Iohn. 1.8
forming all things, so that they want
nothing in glorie.

O blessed and euerlasting glorie,
not of small remembrance, but all
happie in God his presence!

There is also the most glorious
Mother of our Saviour, and constant
virgine Marie, bewtififying the whole
celestiall Court with her comlienesse
and beutie, compassed and accom-
panied with trouper of virgins, as 1 Gen. 49
with sweete Roses and Lillies of the 10.
vallics. Num. 24.

There bee the Angels and archan- 17.
gels, placed in order, who most cheer
fully sound forth the prailes of God. Dan. 9. 24
25.

Isai. 7. 14

There bee the Patriarches, and Iere. 31. 32
Prophets, euen they which being fil- plal. 13. 2
led long agoe with the holy Ghost, 11.
did foretell of Christ his coming, Hag. 1. 8. 10

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whome now they both knowe, and
 euermore confesse to bee their Lord
 y Reu. 7. 14 and Sauior, the king of kings y, and
 Reu. 19. 16 perfect God.

There they beholde eie to eie their
 Redeemer, whom long they looked
 for, and for whose comming they
 longed.

There be the Lords Apostles, and
 disciples, those most reuerende and
 renowned Fathers, which were filled
 with holinesse and grace, and laid a
 strong foundation of the Catholike
 faith.

There especially shineth that reuo-
 z Mat. 3. lend man Iohn, which baptized our
 13, 14. &c. Sauiour Christ z, and was a speciall
 Mar. 1. 9. 10 friend & of my Spouse.

Luk. 3. 21 There is Peter, and Paule, & An-
 a Ioh. 10. 2 drewt, and Philip, and Thomas, and
 Ioh. 11. 7 Iames, and Iohn, and all the other
 20. Apostles and Euangelists, pillars of
 the Church.

To keepe the faith, and to follow
 the example of these men, is the re-
 adie way to euerlasting life.

Moreover, there bee the valiant
 Martyrs enriched with their proper
 blood, and euerlastingly blessed with
 Christ, whose bodies though they
 were most cruelly slain: yet could
 not

of the Imitation of Christ.

not their soules by any torments be
seuered from Christ.

Also, there bee the noble Confes-
sors, which contemned this present
life, that they might be in heauen.

There bee the great and glorious
Doctors, that were so carried aloft in
contemplation, of which many haue
left a liuelie image of holines in their
writings.

There be young men and maidens,
olde men and children praising the
name of the Lord continually, and
ascribing the goodnesse which they
had at any time vnto his mercy.

There they are I say, alway grate-
full, alway zealous, alway iocund,
alway religious, neuer loathing, but
euer louing the Lord.

Oh, how glorious is this king-
dome, where all the Saints dooe
raigne with Christ, arraied with the
fairest roabe b, & be without care of
the other!

b Reu. 16. 11

Reu. 7. 13

There they follow the Lambe
wheresoeuer hee goeth c, for they
cannot part; but reioycing euerla-
stingly, shall reioyce in the Lord.

c Reu. 14. 4

O my Soule, muse thou vpon these
things, and cast thy thoughts vpon
heauenly matters.

I s

That

The fourth booke.

That place indeede is an holy place, and God is in the same.

¶ *Reu. 21. 4.* There is surpassing ioy & peace; good things abound, and euils there be none.

Oh if thou couldest euen a little comprehend the vnspokeable ioyes of God his Saints, then should you finde some comfort:

For in me you shall bee sure to find nothing but labour and sorrow, and tentations, and troubles of this world.

¶ *2. Im. 1. 17* Oh that the giuer of supernall light would vouchsafe to inspire some portion of these ioyes into you and not send you back vnto my new withering foode, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercy, purifie and rid you of all materiall formes, and bring you yea by force into the deepe of his eternall brightnes.

Would to God you could carry backe from that heauenly sanctuarie, a forme and example of true holines which you might imitate.

For better and more true are the examples of celestially, and strong things, than they which are confirmed by earthly demonstrations.

There

of the Imitation of Christ.

Therefore grant Lord, that I may know and knowe what the perfect felicitie of Saints is, not so much by written bookes thereof, as by the holy Ghost, which teacheth of celestiall secrets in such sort, as no sense of man is able to reach therevnto.

Grant also that from henceforth I may liue my mind more seruently vnto heavenly things; and amidst my grievous troubles, valiantly beare the garland of patience, till the debt of flesh beeing paid, I may attaine through thy mercie vnto this felicitie that I so desire.



Chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 22.

1. A godly meditation, concerning the accessse vnto the holy of holies, euen Iesus Christ, the King of Angels. 2. Godly petitions for the forgiuence of sinnes.

a Ps. 44. 4



How art my king, O God a.

Arise now my soule, come, and enter into the wonderfull tabernacle, euen into the house of God.

For it is meet that omitting other things, thou with all reuerence doe proceede to saluare our Lord Iesus Christ b, thy Sauour c, and redeemer d, which is the head of all principallitie and power e; the ioy and crowne of all sainctes; the assured trust and certaine hope of all the faithfull f.

Hee it is which hath made g, and redeemed thee h; he it is which hath for thy sake both laboured i, striven k, and overcome!

Hee is thine aduocate m, and the propitiation for thy sinnes.

He is thy comforter, thy prouider, and thy Lord n.

He.

of the Imitation of Christ.

He is thine onely & singular friend
 that feedeth among the lillies 2, o Sal. S. 1.
 and loueth to rest him vpon thy 16.
 breasts p. p Sal. S. 1.

Who euer hath doone the like for 12.
 the? who euer loued you so entirely?

Come thou vnto him; offer your
 selfe to him; open your whole heart,
 and vsfold euen your hidden secrets
 vnto him.

For no man will better either de-
 clare, or else reueale how you should
 behaue your self in this world, in the
 which, things fall out so strangely.

Let your wishes and prayers be di-
 rected vnto him; and in him let all
 your counsailes abide.

Vaine is the hope of man 7; but q psal. 61. 9
 he is the vpholder of peace.

Through him wee haue open ac-
 cesse vnto the Father 7; and from r Eph. 2. 18
 him we receiue all goodnesse, and
 virtue f. 1. Cor. 1

Whether you mourne, or whether 30. 3. 1.
 you reioyce, make continuall re-
 course vnto him.

Hee is the glasse of life; the rule
 of righteousnesse; the light of the
 soule; the loue of shamefastnes; and
 the ioy of a good conscience.

If thou louest him, it will be none
 hard.

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hard matter for thee to despise the
 vaine pleasures of this world; if thou
 louest him, all sowre things will
 seeme sweet; all heauie things will
 seeme light; and that which other-
 wise you should mislike, you will like
Ro. 8. 35 right well for his sake;

To be brieft, of him, and through
Rom. 11 him, and for him, are all things.
36.

The principall ende both of all
 our thoughts, and of all our actions,
 and of our speech, and of our rea-
 ding, praying, meditating, and specu-
 lation, should be Iesus Christ.

Through him you attaine saluati-
Gal. 3. 13 on, and euerlasting life.

For his loue you will neither feare
 to die, nor refuse to liue, because
 you are to commit your selfe wholly
 to his trust, and to preferre nothing
 before his loue, and honour.

Wherefore come neere, and giue
 thanks to thy Redcemer.

S, O most sweet Iesu, aboue all
 things to be loued, I salute thee most
 religiously, I commend thee most
 highly, and I blesse thee now and
 euerlastingly with all thy crea-
 tures.

O most renowned Iesu, how
 can I praise thee as I ought? When
 shall

of the Imitation of Christ.

shall I thanke thee, as I am bound, in that thy mercies are so infinite to me-ward?

Againe, whatsoever I giue, it is thy gift, and I receiued it from thee.

1 COR. 4.7.

But little or nothing it is that I haue: and can I then sacrifice of nothing?

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee, mine humble, base, and vile sacrifice; and let my gifts bee ascribed to thy goodnes.

Let the quires of heauenly angels attending about thee, sound forth shine infinite praises on my behalfe: also let the soules of the righteous repeate the same.

In the meane while what shall I doe in memorie, and praise of thy most sacred name?

Much I ought to doe, and for many things I am greatly bound; yet am I not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will read of thee, O my sweet Sauiour, I will write of thee; I will sing of thee; I will thinke of thee, I will speake of thee, I will worke for thee, and for thee will I suffer.

In thee will I reioyce, thee will I praise.

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praise, thee will I magnifie, thee will I glorifie.

As it is meete I will worship thee,
b Mat. 4. 10 because thou art my God *b*, in whom
I beleene, whom I doe loue, seeke,
and haue alway desired.

Giue mee some good signe, that
mine eyes may beholde thy goodly
countenance in the heavens.

Humbly I doe throwe downe my
selfe at thy feete in heart, earnestly
with teares desiring thy fauour, that
thou wilt vouchsafe to be good vnto
me.

Write my name in thy Booke of
life; and let that neuer be out-blot-
ted, which thine holy hand hath
written.

I, wretch that I am, and far infe-
rior to any of thy saints, yet trusting
boldly vpon the more than excel-
lent prerogative of thy mercy, be-
seech thee, that at the leastwise I
may bee counted among the basest
and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conuersati-
on is not such, that I dare presume
any thing of of my selfe; and therefore
all mine hope and comfort is, and
resteth in the price of thy precious
blood, wherein I doe wholly repose
my

of the Imitation of Christ.

my selfe, and deeme it requisite that I should do so, together with all which I haue done, offended, deserved and omitted.

And therefore beholde, most gracious Iesu, my basenes and humility; consider the affection of mine heart which I beare toward thee, not for my merit, but for thy mercie sake, which vouchsafest to bee loued euen of the vnworthy.

In respect of mine vnworthinesse I am greatly ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawne on and emboldned through your wonderfull goodnesse and humilitie, which hast in perfect good wil & yeelded not onely to become man, but also to suffer & die, and to be buried for my sake, and therefore vnto thee doe I make recourse, for I finde no goodnesse in my selfe.

Supplie that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe.

Thou hast giuen me a desire to pray vnto thee, to praise, and to blesse thee: because thou art mine hope, & my portion in the land of the liuing. All my desire is to be with thee in the kingdom of heauen; but inasmuch as my time is not yet come, I will write vntill

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vtill the night approach.

In the meane while this may be my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindful of thy name and of thine exceeding great loue; & that I behold thee in this life by the eyes of my faith.

To liue in this world, and yet to repose no trust in thee, O Lord, were a thing intollerable to my soule.

I doe not consent to reioyce with
 Lu. 6. 25 the world; and, and that I may not
 abide without ioy and comfort, I
 i 1. Cor. 1. haue determined to place my ioy in
 31. thee.

Much & often should I go astray,
 greatly should I be tossed in cogita-
 tions, did I not retaine thee fast in
 my minde, and thoughts.

And forsomuch as I am vnable to
 sound the depth of thy diuinitie, I
 thinke it best for mee to turne vnto
 the deedes and sayings of thine hu-
 manitie; because, being in these co-
 gitations, I swaue not altogether
 from thy diuinitie.

Thankes bee to thee, good Iesu,
 sweete and louely Iesu, for vouchia-
 sing to become my brother, to take
 k Ioh. 1. 14 my flesh and bones vpon thee.

Mat. 1. 23

Thankes I say to thee for ente-
 ring

of the Imitation of Christ.

ring into the wombe of good Marie
thy mother, of whose maidenly flesh
thou tookest the holy members of thy
bodie, which thou diddest vnite to
thy diuine nature.

CHAP. 13.

A godly prayer, and commen-
dation of our Saviour
Christ.



Notwithstanding I
am wicked, & guiltie
of manifolde
sinnes; yet haue I
great hope of sal-
uation, because of
thy suffering, and
merits: whereof as I haue a good
minde to consider, so graunte, O my
Lord Christ, that I may with good
leauē so doe.

For who am I to approch nigh vn-
to thee, vnlesse I haue licence?

I knowe mine vnworthinesse to
appeare in his presence, whom the
verie angels doe worship with great
reuerence, saying:

Who is this that commeth out of
the wilderness of this world, so abound-
ing in pleasure?

There-

The fourth booke

a Eccles.
10.9.

Therefore O most blessed Saviour, I am farre vnmeet to thinke of thy glorie and honour, of thy beauty and magnificence; because I am earth and ashes, yea more base am I then earth and ashes, because I am sinfull, and prone vnto all wickednesse.

b Mat. 28.

18.
Hebr. 2.8

But thou being made hier then heauen, hast the whole world vnder thy feete b, and art worthy to be praised and honored for euermore.

Howbeit of thine vnspokeable goodnesse, which passeth all vnderstanding, I am drawne in affection vnto thee, because thou art the comfort of the comfortlesse, and vset most willingly to helpe most miserable sinners.

I acknowledge how I am not only destitute of all comfort, especially of thy fauour; but also verie vnable to doe good vnto my selfe.

But mercifull Iesus, wouldest thou vouchsafe to consider my basenesse, then should I both be ayded & comforted most plentifully in this my trouble.

Therefore I see well, whensoever I am compassed about with affliction and temptation, I am straight way

and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and without feare to flie vnto thee?
for where mercie is most readie, there
grace is in greatest plentie.

And when I haue a good minde to
consider of thy most glorious estate,
and to commend thee in most ho-
nourable manner, I must come forth
with a much purer affection, & may
not goe forward without the con-
duction of Gods heavenly light.

Assuredly hee shal haue no glorie,
but shame, that presumeth without
all reuerence to approche vnto thy
gate.

And he which commeth thereinto
must proceed with all reuerence and
humilitie, ioyned with good hope,
that he may finde grace to be admit-
ted.

Wherefore both humbly, and re-
uerently, and deuotely, and boldly I
go to thee-ward.

Let the godly loue of thy name
listen then what I say.

The heauen reioyceth, the earth
wondereth, when by faith mine heart
saith; Christ is my saviour.

Sathan flieth, hell trembleth, when
my conscience saith, Christ is my
Saviour.

The

The fourth booke

The world waxeth vile, and the
flesh humble, when as a christian doth
say, Christ is my Saviour,

Sorrow departeth, newe comfort
approbeth, when my minde pro-
nounceth, Christ is my Saviour.
Slouthfulnes vanisheth, mine heart
through loue fainteth, when ze-
loulie I can say, Christ is my Saviour.

Zeale encreaseth, compassion
ariseeth, hope groweth, comfort wax-
eth strong, when my soule soundeth,
Christ is my Saviour.

Mine heart is iocund, mine affecti-
on becommeth sounde, when in truth
I doe say Christ is my Saviour.

For such is the force of these words
vtered of a faithfull soule, that no
man is able to expresse the same in
wordes, but still it resteth more his
and excellent, than may bee reached
vnto by the wit of man.

Which maketh mee once againe
most humble to bowe my knees vnto
to thee, O blessed Saviour, and still I
say, O Christ my Saviour.

O Most gracious Iesu receive my
prayer, and mee with it, that I may
finde some what that may like thee
well, and embolden mee, and kindle
my

Chap. 23 191 Without Christ, no saluation,
of the Imitation of Christ.

my zeale, and keepe mee euermore
in continuall praising of thine holy
name.

Oh that for the satisfying my de-
sire to praise, and to pray vnto thee
from the verie bottome of my heart,
both all my members were forthwith
conuerred into tongues, and those
tonges into fierie voices, that I might
finde a way to glorifie thee, my Savi-
our, world without end !

Oh that for all my sins wherewith
I haue deserued thine indignation,
offended grieuously thy father, and
dishonored thee with all the hoste of
heauen, I might once so thoroughly
bewaile, and repent, that I might
heereafter take a new trade of life to
thy glorie, and the comfort of my
soule.

Oh that thou wouldest asist mee
in well doing, seeing my life fraile &
I all subiect to offending !

Oh pardon & forgiue all my sins,
either wilfully or negligently com-
mitted, all my vaine thoughts, my
ungodly speeches, my abominable
deedes !

O most gracious Iesu, I say, doe
thou both defend mee from dooing
any

The fourth booke.

any wickednetie hereafter, and forgive, I pray thee, all my finnes for-past : so shall I bee both more deuout, the more zealous, and the more carefull in saying, thou Christ art my Saniour, both in mine heart, and with my mouth, in company, and in my chamber, and in the garden, & in the field, and in all places wheresoeuer I shall be.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee O Christ my Saniour ?

What is better, or more profitable, or more necessarie, especially for mee a great sinner, than to finde fauour in thy sight, O Christ my Saniour ?

And therefore it is that I haue desired and still doe craue, euen that by thine intercession and meanes, I may haue the grace of God thy Father, who, as both thy selfe hath said, and the Apostle doth witnes, hast all power given thee both in heauen and

e Mat. 28 8

earth e.
There is no praiere more welcome to thee than this is, nor any thing more necessarie for mee, than the grace and fauour of God.

If I haue the grace of God, what-soeuer else I doe want, I am rich e-nough

of the Imitation of Christ.

enough.

For what is all my endenouring
if I lacke that? Again, what can I not
doe, if I be assisted and holpen there-
by?

I know that many and diuers are my
wicked affections: but yet against all
passions the grace of God is a most
effectual medicine; & if once it come,
it will mitigate them all.

I doe also stand in need of spirituall
wisdom and knowledge: but the
grace of God is a most excellent tea-
cher, & instructor of heavenly know-
ledge, and is able euē suddenly to in-
struct mee in whatsoeuer things are
necessary vnto saluation.

Not to require more than is neces-
sary, or to desire to vnderstand more
than is lawful to be knowne, is against
the will of God, whose pleasure is
that we should be humbled vnder his
hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for
me, O Christ, which is so noble and
precious, that indeede I ought nei-
ther to desire nor crase any other thing
than grace for grace.

CHAP. 14.

A prayer for comfort vnto
Iesus Christ.

a Pla. 45. 2.



Open thy mouth in thine own
name, who art full of all spiritual
graces &c.

Open thy mouth in thine own
name, who art full of all spiritual
graces &c.

I. I am the fountaine of mercie; full
of loue and sweetnesse.

I am the Ladder for sinners; the
hope and pardon of the guiltie.

I am the comfort of the sorrowful
and the special ioy of all saints.

Come vnto mee so many as loue
me, and fill your selues at the brasse
of my comfort; because I am good
and mercifull to all which come vnto
mee.

Come vnto me both righteous and
sinners, I will see vnto the Father for
you; I will intreate him to bee good
vnto you, and to fill you with the ho-
ly Ghost.

of the Imitation of Christ.

I call euery one, I looke for all,
I desire to haue all to come vnto mee;
I despise no sinner, but with the an-
gels in heauen I reioyce exceedingly
ouer that sinner which repenteth,
and so commeth into the fauour of
God: for no one drop of my blood
which I shed for the worlde, is in
vaine.

c Lu. 15. 10.

Therefore come vnto mee, yee
sonnes of men, consider and behold
my zeale for you vnto God my Fa-
ther.

Lo, I haue taken his wrath vpon
my selfe, I haue borne his displea-
sure, yea, and continually doe I
make supplication for you vnto him
e, whom you knowe right well you
haue greuously offended.

d Isa. 53.

12. &c.

e 2. Ioh. 12.

Turne then, and approche, repent,
and of my worde you shall haue par-
don.

For lo; I stand betweene heauen
and earth, betweene God and sin-
ners; and that this world perish not,
I obtaine through my prayers.

Wherefore abuse not my goodnes
and mercie; but beware of offending,
least when you little thinke thereof, f Mat. 24
indignation bee poured vpon you, 44
and insollerable vengeance g. Rom. 2.

The fourth Booke

I doe forewarne you as children, I
beseech you as friends, bee you per-
fect as your heavenly Father is per-
fect. *h Mat. 5. 48*

Forget not mee, who haue bene,
and am, and will be mindfull of you.
For I doe both pittie such as are in
miserie, and I doe entreate for those
which crie vnto me. *Job. 2. 1. 2*

S. O gracious speech, and full of all
comfort!

O heavenly voice, sweetlie drop-
ping from heauen to the cōforting of
sinners, & reioicing of the righteous.

O celestiall musicke, how sweetly
dooft thou resounde in a desperate
conscience!

Whence is it that the Saniour of
mankinde will thus talke with me?

Blessed art thou, O Christ, and
blessed are the words of thy mouth.
For honie is vnder thy tongue, . and
the fauor of thy speech excelleth all
sweetnes.

My soule was mollified, so soone
as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voyce
sounded in mine eares, but my soule
within did spring for ioy.

For my spirit reuiued within mee;
and all mine entralles were filled
with

of the Imitation of Christ,

with new comfort; because good & ioyfull things are tolde mee this day by you.

I was doleful, but now I am iocund because of your wordes. For your voice is sweet in mine eares.

I was grieved and desolate; but now I am reuiued, and made merrie. For thou hast sent thine hand from on hie, and touched mee, whereby of weak I am become strong.

Scarce could I speake: but now I haue a good minde to sing, and to praise thee higly.

I was loth to liue, and now I am willing to die, because I haue thee, Christ, for mine aduocate, with the Father, to whose mercie I commend my selfe, euen from this time for euer and euer.

For since first you began to speake vnto the heart of the desolate Orphane, I haue bene changed into a better state, and greatly comforted in my minde.

I was almost at the doore of desperation, but thy comfort came and lifted me vp with these words.

L. What is the matter Son? and who are they which would hurt thee?

Fear not, I will see vnto thee my sonne,

The fourth Booke

sonne.

k **Reu. 1.4** I doe live with God my Father,
and I sit at his right hand, being a
faichfull high Priest; and an interces-

l **1. John 2** for thy finnes?

2.2 In mee thou shouldest repose thy
m **Ioh. 11.** trust, because I doe both give life,
35. and destroy death.

n **1. Cor.** I was intorne of a virgine in
25.55. time o; but of my Father begotten
o **Maz. 1.** before all times p; and when the full
18.19. &c.nes of time came I suffered for mans
p **Pla. 2.7** saluation q.

Heb. 1.5 Lo, I am the hope and comfort
q **Gal. 4.4** of the godly, and by mee is faith and
5. victorie attained v.

r **1. Cor. 15** And therefore let neither me, nor
57. these things be out of thy minde, and
thou wilt not feare any darts of Sa-
tan.

S. Oh happy houre! O blessed state,
that my Lord and Saviour wil vouch-
safe to comfort on this wise my trou-
bled heart!

Oh that I might still heare thy
so comfortable wordes! for greatly
doe they inflame, and moue mee,
and touch mee euen at the verie
heart.

O blessed Christ, thou neuer cea-
rest to send forth the sweete milke of
heauen.

of the Imitation of Christ.

heavenly consolation!

For by reason of the abundance of thy grace, thou canst not deny favour to such as crave the same at thine hands; yet often thou shewest much mercie even to the very sinner.

f Mar. 5. 41

O Christ, thou excellest in pitifulnesse, in mercie, and in loving!

O Saviour, to whom none is to be compared, thou art above all to be loved, and to be worshipped.

O Sonne of God, by whom we are also the sonnes of God, & of whom

Gal. 4. 6

we are called Christians, thou art of all good men to be served most religiously, and above all.

7.

1 Act. 12. 16

2 Mat. 4. 10

O friend of all friends, O King of heaven & earth, O Lord of Angels,

1. 1b. 31

16.

conqueror of devils, draw me after thee, least I fall, and so rest vnder the

2 Ren. 1. 8

6.

heavie burden of sin.

a Heb. 1. 6

Pour out thy grace. Send mee thy comfortable dewe from above, that

7. &c.

Mark. 1. 13

truly I may perceive, how thou art the procurer, and the open fountaine

b Mat. 4. 10

11.

of all mercie.

Mirk 5. 7

L. I am indeed the spring of holy love, and of chaste and religious fear, of godly conference, and of sweet

8 9. &c.

c 1. Pet. 3.

24. 25.

consolation.

Therefore when you doe heare

K 4

my

The fourth Sermon

my name, reioyce with your whole heart, and magnifie the goodnesse of your God.

In honouring me, you honour the Father, which is God and I am; for

John 1.1

2. &c.

emat. 1. 18

20.

1. Cor. 15

28.

g Mar. 6. 46

h Mat. 1. 21

2. Pet. 1. 18

19.

1. Rev. 17. 14

Rev. 19. 14

k Dan. 2. 19

Heb. 1. 6. 7

24.

1 Gal. 3. 13

m Act. 10

43. Mat. 11

28.

I am Iesus the Sonne of God, and this name shal I have while the world endureth.

But what is Iesus? even the Sonne of the living God; y^e the Saviour of the world; the King of heaue and earth; the Lord of Angels; the redeemer of the faithfull; & the iudge of quick and dead.

And what is Iesus? the hope of the godly; the comfort of the desolay; the peace of the mecke; the iherusalem of the poore; the glorie of the humble; the strength of the weak; the way of such as wandere; the light of such as see not; the staffe of such as walke not; the oyle of such as fere not; the stay of the oppressed; the helpe of the troubled; and the singular refuge of all good men.

Blesse the Sonne with the Father, and so God will blesse you.

Give honour also and glorie to the Father, whensoever you praise me.

His glorie is my ioy; & my praise, is his worship.

Place

of the Imitation of Christ.

Place me and the Father as a seale
vpon thine heart, and as a token vpon
thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or
pray, or reade, or wright, or worke
you, let my name Iesus and God be
often reuerendly in your mouth, but
continually in your heart.

S.O grant it may be to good Iesus;
and let all people, tribes and tongues,
serue thee, and let all creatures bow
at thy presence.

Let heauen say, Raigne thou Iesus;
let the earth make answer, yea, for
euer and euer let him raigne.

Yea let all Saints confesse thy glo-
rious Name, and all good people re-
ioyce before the Father, and thee his
lambe, and our Lord Iesus Christ, p Ioh. 1. 39
p Rom. 3. 9

Amen.



Chap.

25

The fourth booke

CHAP. 15.

What for God his benefices we are
so thank him.



Blessed be the glorious
Name of the Lord for
evermore.

hpl. 72. 19
b Iohn. 10.
37.

O Lord my God
let all my doings, all

my reading, all my writing, my
thoughts wordes, and vnderstan-
ding, tend vnto the advancement of
thine honour.

e. 1. 205. 10
31.

Yes, let me both begin my busines
in thy Name, and goe forward in thy
fear, and finish it with thy blessing.

That which thou hast given, that
seeme againe; and from whence
the streames doe flowe, thither let
them returne.

It neuer goeth better with mee,
neither dooth it relish better to my
soule, then when vnfainedly I doe
ascribe all to thee, whatsoever I haue
either done or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thanks,
which I then dooe as I ought, when
for that I haue receiued, and thou
hast given, I ascribe all praise to thee,
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and nothing to my selfe.

For what can I, a wicked and vnprofitable seruant, render vnto thee my God? Alas, all that I can do, yea, if I should doe all which thou commaundest to bee doone, it is to none effect &.

d Lu. 7. 10.

So that I am brought vnto nothing, and rightly humbled. And indeede it is very well that I am so brought downe, that thou alone maist bee iustified, and haue the praise of all, and that vile dust may at no time glorie in it selfe.

f Psal. 51. 4.

Howbeit, I minde not to surceasse, but will extoll thee both with heart and mouth. For albe I discharge not my dutie therein as I ought: yet ought I to speak of thy goodnes, and not to be silent.

O my God, thou art my glorie: my praise shall alwaies be of thee.

He that would but a little consider of thy glorie, and know what it is to glorie in the Lord, how would hee despise all outward glorie!

He that would, euen but a little, taste of thy sweetnes; how quickly would he loath, as most bitter, the pleasure of this world!

Hee that would receive euen but

The fourth booke

a small sparkle of love into his breast, how would hee burne in affection! For full gladly would hee contemne all things to haue thy friendship: and would count it all sweete and easie to be borne, whatsoever he should doe, or suffer for thy love sake.

1 Ro. 8. 35

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnesse to man-ward; how would he reioyce, and run after thee! Hee would seeke nothing so charitie, he would keepe nothing so warlike, he would pursue nothing so eagerlie, as to serue thee. For in louing, he would feele no burden, because loue would beare all burdens.

Sa. 5. 8. 6. 7

So then they which complaine of the burden, doe plainly declare how they haue little true love in them.

To serue of love, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labour.

True love dooth neither respect commoditie, nor feare damage, but in all things seeketh that which may please thee.

Oh Christ, how sweet is thy love, how well doth it sound, how sweetly dooth it enter, how strongly doth it binde!

Oh

of the Imitation of Christ.

Oh that it would fast binde me
to thy continuall seruice I Oh that it
would wholly take me, and whollie
subdue me, and wholly and altoge-
ther make me to be thine!

For then, and nor before am I free,
when I am taken of thy loue, and vt-
terly depriued from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy seruant, yea m Ps. 145.
thy seruant am I, because thou hast 12.
redeemed mee. n 1. Cor. 6

I am thy seruant with a verie good 20.
will, and am not ashamed to be pro- 1. cor. 7. 23.
perly thine. 1. Pet. 1. 19.

I wish not to bee mine owne man
again: and therefore, Lord, helpe
mee, that I may bee freed from that
which naturally is mine.

Oh blowe and kindle, and inflame
the fire of my zeale, so shall mine
heart boile, and become pure cleare,
& pleasant: for thy loue expelleth vice,
and consumeth sin.

Lay thou fast hold vpon the band
of loue, and I shall stand and conti-
nue in thy seruice.

Full well I wot, no good can my ser-
uice doe you, Lord; but all the be-
nefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I doe
that which I knowe is acceptable in
thy sight.

Would

The fourth booke

Would I did, and hid not, that I
revealed; & concealed not thy works,
Lord!

When shall I bee able worthily to
consider the manifold benefits con-
ferred vpon me of God!

Mercifully hast thou dealt with thy
servant O Lord; but alacke, I neuer
thanked thee for the same, as thou
deservest.

And therefore am I punished, and
pinched at the verie heart, even be-
cause I am unable to answer thy be-
nefits so great and so manifolde.

Oh that I could euen but once
worthily, and thoroughly thanke
thee for all these things!

But what may proceede from him
in whom nothing is? An emptie
vessell, can minister no drinke.

What then shall I doe: Something
I must give. For it is not lawfull to
come before G O D with an emptie
hand. Because the Lord abhorreth
the vngratefull man.

Oh, that I could finde something
in this world to give you, that might
be acceptable in your sight!

Oh my Lord, whom in heart I
loue, what would you that I should
give you?

• Luk. 17

17

As

of the Imitation of Christ.

As for any good thing of mine :
you neede it not *p.* And why then *p. Pl; c. 12.*
exact you a gift of mine hands ? For
riches, none is comparable to you,
and yet requise you somewhat of
mee ?

L. That which I demand is euen
your selfe whollie. For so it is expe-
dient if you would purchase my fa-
uour.

I will giue grace to you, and you
shall shewe grace to mee; and so
loue shall bee continued betwene
vs.

Giue me your selfe, and you haue
giuen euen all.

S. O good Iesus, the fountaine of al
goodnes, the fountaine of life, the
fountaine of grace, the fountaine of
sweetnesse, the verie fountaine of aye
lasting wisdom, poure vpon mee
euen at this instant, I beseech thee,
the gift of thy celestiall grace, and
teach me to be gratefull, and to giue
my selfe before all things whollie
vnto you; for this is the dearest thing
that I can render.

This I doe knowe, and acknow-
ledge. Therefore receiue mee: lo, I
am whollie thine, and all that mine is,
is thine.

Onclie

The fourth Booke

Onely one thing there is which
I cannot gine; and that is my sinne,
which is mine indeed properly, and
therefore not to bee imputed vnto
thee.

Sinne is; and all defaultes with-
in me are to be ascribed to me onely;
but glorie, and for all thy beneficia
thankes, be vnto thee.

But now in calling thy beneficia in-
to mind, of many I gather only a few,
and those which do most of all moue
me, & appeare in my mind. For nei-
ther will the time suffer to recite, nei-
ther can my thoughts comprehend
9-1. cor. 2. 9 them all.

Because for number they are infi-
nite, for greatnes incomprehensible,
1 Mat. 10. 8 and inestimable for goodnesse. For
James 1. 17 bought they cannot bee, because
1 Mat. 23. they are freely given. And there-
fore onely thankes bee required for
2 Mat. 4. 10 them, otherwise all shall be taken a-
u John 1. 1 way, as from that vngratefull one.

2. 3. First therefore & afore all things,
Colos. 1. 15 I thank thee, O Lord my God, crea-
tor of all things, for making mee
2 Gen. 1. 27 a man, after thine image and simili-
Psa. 119. 73 tude, and for placing mee ouer the
y Psa. 8. 6 workes of thine hands.

7 &c. This is the great and first benefite
bestowed.

Chap. 17 209 The first benefice of God to man,
of the Imitation of Christ.

bestowed vpon mee, and that of thy
meere goodnesse.

For I made not my selfe, but thine
hands did fashion me ⁊ they brought ⁊ pla. 100.3
me into this world through my pa-
rents ⁊, whom thy will was, should ⁊ psal. 139
serue thee herein, 13. 15. &c.

And so, I am better than other crea-
tures, exalted aboue the beastes of
the field, and birds of the aire; in b Gen. 1.28
that I am fashioned after thine image
⁊ indued with eternall wisdom; and
naturally participate of the light va-
create, and of the vchangeable
verbe, ci. cor. 11.7

Wherefore for my beeing, liuing,
and vnderstanding, I giue thee eter-
lasting praise, wishing and desiring
herewithall, that all creatures both in
heauen and earth, may everlastinglie
commend thy glorious and most ex-
cellent names.

And bleesse thee, O Father, Lord of
heauen and earth, who of nothing d psal. 97.1
through thy onely begotten Sonne
Iesus Christ in the holy Ghost, hast
created all things. c Iohn 1.1

Yea all things thou hast made, not of 2.3
necessitie compelled, but of pure and
speciall loue moued thereunto, thereby
to shewe thy power vnto the sons of
men,

The fourth booke

¶ p^l 145. 4 men f; and by thine invisible and
coeternall wisdomewith thee, thou
hast most perfectly disposed this vi-
sible world g.

h Mat. 23
18.
¶ Let all thy creatures subiect in all
things to thee h, and ordained for the
use of man i, blesse thee.

¶ For at thy commandement both
raine falleth from heauen, and fruite
springeth from the earth.

The sunne shineth brightly in the
day time, the starres give light by
course in the night.

The fountaines spring, the rivers
flowe, and fishes of diuerse kinds doe
swim.

The birds not onely flie, but sing
also; and the goates, the colts, and
horses, doe spring vpon the moun-
taines.

The Sheepe and other cattill, doe
ioy in good pasture, and diuerse o-
ther liuing creatures doe run about
the groues.

The ground waxeth greene, the
fields prosper, and trees of the wood
doe yeeld both boughes and fruit.

O Lord, which onely doost won-
derous things k, even all these are thy
workes.

Another benedict which thou hast
bestowed

Chap. 11. **THE** The second benefit of Condemnation
of the Imitation of Christ.

bestowed vpon mee, is the mysterie
of incarnation, the works of my l. Ti. 3. 6
redemption, the price of our salua-
tion, euen the fruit of thy passion and
death.

O greates worke of mercie ! Oh
worke of most excellent loue m m Ro. 5. 8
most abiect humilitie m, of most rare n Phil. 2. 8
patience ! &c.

No man could merit, nor Angell o 1. Pet. 1. 18
procure this thing.

The Prophets haue wondered at
it ; the Apostles haue seene & taught
it ; the faithfull haue imbraced it ; &
the elect specially doe loue, & call
it into minde.

The due consideration of this be-
nefit stirreth vp good desires ; infla-
meth the heart, nourisheth deuotion ;
inlighteneth the minde ; purgeeth the
affection ; draweth on to heauen-
ward ; withdraweth from the world ;
driueth vnto God ; and vniteth the
soule with Christ.

This benefit farre excelleth the a-
boue mentioned : yet there is one
which gaue each, and hath bestowed
both of them vpon vs, euen our Lord
Iesus Christ.

For what the better had I bin for
my life, if I had not bin redeemed.
with

The fourth book

with the precious blood of my Saviour
our Christ?

pGal2.3.

83.

9 P6.130.7

2.7.08 m

2. 3. 1979

172 Cor. 13

(Ephes. 2, 2)

Ro. 8.32

1. Tim. 2

36.

2 Phi. 2.5.6

7 Eccles. 10

9.

2 Gal. 1. 13

3-WLC7.26.

Therefore the grace and mercie of
God grewe vpon mee; and plentiful
redemption was made: for the cor-
rupted nature of man without the aid
of God his maker, could neuer have
bene repaired.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort &c, thou to redeem thy damned servant *f*, haſt giuen thine only Sonne to the death.

O Wonderfull kinde of shine to vs-ward, vnto which, neither the wit of man, nor the vnderstanding of Angels can attaine. But alone, sweete Christ, thou art the begin-ning and the end of our Saluation, & alone couldest helpe the miserable, & damned, thou alone art primum to the same.

For thou diddest youth safeto ap-
pear vnto the world in the likeness of
a most vile seruant x. j. and for mon-
tal wormes y. euen of meeke pittie
receinedst with a willing minde the
iudgement of a cruell death. j.

O good Iesus, thou which art the
fountain of mercie, the light of eye
lasting glory, the pure glasse (without
spot) of God his maiestic, kinde
mine

Chap. 313 The second benefit of Gods man
of the Imitation of Christ.

mine heart with the meditation of
this inspeakeable benefit, bestowed
vpon me, and vpon all mankind. **b Ro. 5. 15**
16. &c.

But this, as was the former, is gene-
rall, sufficient to saue all, but not effe-
ctual in all; by reason of the incredu-
litie, and malice of many: howbeit
it saucth, and is profitable to all the
elect, for whose sake all things were
created; and be, as I may say created,
again, through thee my Saviour.

O good Iesus, how manifolde are
the benefits brought vnto vs by thine
humanitie!

Thou becamest our brother, and
flesh of our flesh, that we might be
counted the children of God, and
haue access vnto the Father, thro-
ugh thee, the fire of whose dis-
pleasure none could quench, but thou
alone of whom himselfe did say: **c Ioh. 1 14**
d Gal. 4. 6. 7
e 1 Iohn. 2
1. 2
f Mat. 3. 17
Mat. 17. 5.
*This is my beloved Sonne, in whom I am
well pleased.*

Happie is the soule, which earnestly
recordeth, and heartily loueth, and
worthily extolleth the Sacraments
of our redemption; and for them
thanketh thee; and finally depen-
deth vpon thy counsaile, more than
vpon her owne sense.

For none is meete to search our, no-
wile.

The fourth booke

wisdom can reach into this mysterie; onely it is the strength of beleife, and the purenes of the heart lightened from above g, that beholdeth the same.

Oh, blessed is hee that is worthy to receiue that by grace, which the wife of the world could not vnderstand by nature h !

Oh sweet Iesu, the wisdom of the Father, make mee in the light of faith to knowe this great and wonderfull mysterie of thine incarnation, for therein the sweetnesse of our whole saluation lyeth, and thereby the rarest friendship that euer was scene appeareth k, and through it the vnsarchable fulnesse of thy

wisdom glistereth most gloriously.

Oh let thy seruants growe on still in godlines, in the studie of well doing, and more and more in the memorable secret of thine incarnation, make mee acquainted with the mysterie of thine holy passion, and draw mee whollie into the meditation of thy worke l

The declaration of this loue, and humilitie, is a wonderfull deepe, and a certaine celestiall sea, which may

Chap. 19. 215 The second benefit of God on man
of the Imitation of Christ.

not be soone ouer, wherein do swim
to and fro the spirituall fishes both
small and great, which thou hast ta-
ken within the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so great
loue and sweetnesse, thinke so great
humilitie and kindnes abide still in
my remembrance; let it alwaie re-
maine in euerie sacrifice of prayer
that I am to make; and in all mine
holy exercises let there bee some-
what, as pleasant frankincense, and
delightfull spices, for a sweet mel-
ling sauer to be offered vnto God the
Father, concerning the mystrie of
thine incarnation and passion.

Let now then such as thou hast
redeemed, I say, whom thou hast
redeemed out of the hand of the e-
nemy, sing out with mee the long ! Luk. 1. 74.
of thine heavenly praise, and of in-
warde ioy together with thanksgi-
uing.

Yea let all the Angels standing a-
bout thy throne, fall vpon their fa-
ces, and worship the Lambe of God,
who hath taken away the sins of the
world, saying as in Iohn. 1.

Praise, and glorie, and wisdom, 29.
and thanks, and honour, and power, n Reue. 7.
and might, bee vnto our Lord Iesus 11.

Christ

The fourth booke

Christ for evermore, Amen.
A third benefite not inferior to the former, is the grace of iustification, whereby of thy goodnesse thou hast drawne me vnto repentance, and amendment of life, forgiving my sin, and giving me both hope of pardon, and willingness to doe well, and to serve thee evermore.

This Master Paule dooly had considered, he admonisheth his disciples to be both thankfull for so greates benefite, and also much shall of the heavenly grace, and to studie to shewe the same filiall duty to his personall calling.

1. Cor. 1

26. 27.

Brethren I say here a. you for your calling. how ab. many wise men of the flesh, not many might be, and yet not called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.

These things I consider in my selfe who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and vnto me for this world: yet by thine holy calling am I saved from the shipwreck of the same, vnto thine holy service. And this I ascribe wholly, not vnto any goodnesse of mine, but vnto thy providence.

For the which I extoll thy goodness, and blesse thee, even I lay downe this

And

ling

ling mee graciously, for giuing mee a
desire to please thee, for pardoning
all my sins; for putting me vnder thy
sweete yoke, softening mine heart
with the oyle of thy spirit, whome
the worlde neither knoweth, neither
seeth, nor sauoureth.

O mercifull Iesu keepe mee in this
state, I beseech thee, increase thy
gift of grace within mee more and
more, so long as I remaine in this vi-
sible light.

I perceiue right well this calling
of mine is a great benefit, not giuen
to all men, but onely to such as God
the Father hath ordained thereunto:
because it is not in him that willeth,
nor in him that runneth; but in God
that sheweth mercy, that euery
mouth may be stopped, and all the
worlde culpable before God; & that
no flesh should reioyce in thy presence,
nor ascribe any of their owne ver-
ues, or good works, to themselves.

For if thou shouldst deale with
me in iustice, alas, I were then damned
with the cursed spirites in hell.

But of thy goodnesse, O Lord, thou
hast spared mee, and forgiven my
sins, whereby I am not as the childe.

p Ro. 9.16

q Ro. 3.19

r 1 Cor. 1

29

The fourth booke

of perdition.

And therefore am I bound to render great thanks vnto thee for so excellent a benefit: and would to God, both in my speech, and in my life, all the daies of my life I might answer my calling!

But Lord, in steede of all thanks, receiue, I beseech thee, my poorest service, whereby I desire, and indeed am bound to serue thee.

Grant also that the debt of my service may proceede from the heart, and finally agree to thy will and honour; and that mine heart bee neuer turned from thy loue, but that both my soule and bodie may alike watch and perseuer day and night in thine holy service, euen so long as life is within my bodie; and I haue my wit to remember thee; let thy praise be neuer out of my mouth, nor the remembrance of thy manifold benefits slip out of mine heart.

And if thy seruant shall yet liue many yeeres; either an hundred, or howe many sooner, grant, that I maie not prooue luke warme, or abashed at thy service, but be euen so zealous, and so willing to serue thee, as I was at the first houre and day when

Chapter 35 319 The third benefit of God on man.
of the Imitation of Christ.

when mine heart was admonished and confirmed of thee, euen with a pure and whole minde only to follow thee my Lord.

Neither let any infirmitie or aduersitie hinder my purpose; but euen as now I meane, and purpose in the hearing of thee my God: so I beseech thee giue grace, that what now I haue promised, I may performe.

And although through my infirmitie and faults, this my course shall bee broken, as there is no man so righteous vpon earth but he sinneth; yet I beseech thee suffer me not to despaire, and to faint utterly, but put into my minde forthwith to bow the knees of mine heart, and with much sorrow and teares to offer vnto thee my wofull and wounded conscience to bee healed with the salue of thy mercie, and that my purpose may bee bound more surely than euer it was.

Let mee neuer repent mee of this couenant, but still giue thanks, that I haue founde such fauour in thine eyes as to bee accepted into thine holie warfare.

Thou canst, O almightie, and all
I a mercifull

1 Eze. 10.5
2 Co. 6.18

The fourth booke

u uif. 12. 30 mercifull God ⁊, who haſt of me
3 Cor. 1. 3 thing created mee ⁊, and forſake
x Gen. 1. 26 the fall, and infirmities of man; thou
Pla. 100. 3 art able, I ſay, and that thou wilt I
beſeech thee, forgive the finnes which
I haue committed; ſupply what I
haue omitted; reſtore what I haue
loſt, heale what is ſicke; cleaſe what
is vnclauſe; lighten what is darke;
aſſwage that which ſwelleth; inflame
what is quenched; reſtaure that is
broken; recouer that is neglected;
amende what is awrie; make plaine
what is rugged; reſtraine what is eu-
rion; call home that which wan-
dereth; place what is out of order;
yea and alter the whole ſtate of
my miſde, that nothing bee wanting
to my former purpoſe, and let all
occaſion of euill worke for the beſt
vnto mee; I moſt humbly deſire
thee.

This change, is made by the
right hand of God; this is God his
viſitation; this is the manifolde
conference of the diuine good-
neſſe.

In ſteade of all thanks, accept
the deuoute ſervice of thine holy
Church where-ſo-euer, with the

ſweete

Chap. 25. 322 The third benefit of God on man.
of the Imitation of Christ.

sweete praises of the whole court of
heaven.

And let all the Saintes from the
beginning of the worlde, which tho-
ugh thy grace haue beene enlighte-
ned and called, yea and all the faith-
full and Christian people, which ei-
ther bee in the worlde, or haue beene
sent vnto, or shall liue hereafter, let
them I say together celebrate and
praise thy all sweete and glorious
name, which is aboue all names to be
blessed.

y Phil. 2.9
10

Let them repeate againe, and a-
gaine with great voyce, repeate all
praises due, and deseruedly to bee
sayde of thy name, and that so ma-
ny times, as there bee either in the
heaven, starres; or in the sea fishes; or
in the earth, countries; or in the Bible,
letters.

And all this being done, yet must
I say, they haue not prayed thy
name sufficiently, the which I de-
sire to commend euen to the re-
uerence of my strength, and by all
means to extoll, until I attaine vnto
those praises which now cannot
be exprest by the voyce of mortall
men.

I 3.

So

The fourth booke

So that thou seest now my Soule
 the greatnes and the excellencie
 of God thy creator and redeemer
 his benefits, the which no creature
 nor all creatures may recompence,
 whom hee hath made vnto the praise
 and glory of his eternall and blessed
 name, who needeth no glory, but
 is alone all-sufficient for himselfe; hee
 that is what hee is, in his owne glo-
 ry.

2 Isa. 43. 7

2 Exo. 3. 14

The number of his benefits was so
 great, that I could not place them
 all before mine eyes; and therefore
 of a great many I chose three pre-
 cious gifts, euen as the Wisemen
 did, which were about to offer to
 the Lord, wherein I thought good
 to comprehend the rest.

b Mat. 23. 21

For every benefit of God, if you
 marke well, is either of nature, or of
 grace, or of superexcellencie: and
 whatsoever else is, maye fullie be
 referred vnto one of these three
 kinds. In the creation, you haue the be-
 nefit of nature; in the Redemption
 the benefit of grace; in our Iustification,
 those the benefit
 of grace.

Chapter 17. The third booke of Gedon man.
of the Imitation of Christ.

For all which, and for every of
them, glorie bee to thee. O sacred
Trinitie, one equall deitie, both
before all worldes, nowe
and for evermore,

c Re. 17. 12

Amen.

FINIS.

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